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THE

THIRD PART

OF

Naked Truth:

OR,

Some ſerious Conſiderations, that are of High Concern to the Ruling Clergy of *England*, *Scotland*, or any other Proteſtant Nation.

AND ALSO

A Diſcovery of the Excellency of the Proteſtant Religion as it ſtands in Oppoſition to Papiſtical Deluſions.

Being a Repreſentation of what is the true GLORY of Proteſtants, and

WHAT ARE

The Baſe, Contemptible and Ridiculous Principles, on which thoſe that are called Roman Catholicks do build, as upon the Sand.

Being very neceſſary for all Proteſtant Families in this preſent Juncture of time.

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2 Theſſ. 2. 8, 9, 10, 11.

And that wicked ſhall be revealed whom the Lord ſhall conſume with the Spirit of his Mouth, and ſhall deſtroy with the Brightneſs of his Coming; even him whoſe Coming is after the working of Satan, with all Power, and Signs and lying Wonders, and with all deceivableneſs of Unrighteouſneſs in them that periſh; becauſe they received not the LOVE of Truth that they might be ſaved, and

For this Cauſe God ſhall ſend them ſtrong Deluſions that they ſhould believe a LYE.

LONDON,

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MCALPIN COLLECTION

THE

PREFACE,

BY A

Friend of the Author.

THough Falſhood and Errors have need of a Veil or a Vizard to hide the naked Face of it, becauſe Falſhood when it appears in its own Colours it is a very unpleaſant and unlovely Object: Yet on the contrary Truth appears moſt lovely, and moſt deſirable when the naked Face of it is moſt perſpicuous, when it appears without Veils or Vizards.

In this enſuing Diſcourſe, Truth is ſo nakedly diſcovered, (viz. *thoſe parts of Truth here treated of*) *as the Ingenious Readers will certainly be as much enamoured with the Beauty of it, as once they were with that worthy Diſcourſe that firſt appeared in this Nation, bearing that name of Naked Truth, which now is ſtiled The firſt Part,* (*another Diſcourſe bearing the Title of the Second Part of Naked Truth having been alſo ſome time ſince publiſhed*) *for as in that firſt part of Naked Truth, great Lovelineſs did appear to all ingenious and un-intereſſed Perſons; ſo aſſuredly this third part of Naked Truth, will ingage the Hearts of many thouſands to it, that may have a view of it.*

And though ſome Perſons (*whoſe Errors, and Evils, that firſt part of Naked Truth did diſcover*) (*at leſt by reflection*) *were ſo impudent as to ſcribble againſt it: yet what did they do in it, but lay open their own Shame and Folly to all men? So that if they had been publickly known, they would have expoſed their Perſons as much to contempt and hiſſing, as their dirty Papers were to Abhorrency.*

In this third part of Naked Truth, is a diſcovery of ſome of thoſe parts of Truth, as were not treated of in the firſt Part, nor yet in that which is ſtiled the ſecond part of Naked Truth, but in this Diſcourſe three things are performed.

Firſt, The Naked Truth is ſo laid open with reference unto ſome things, which concern the Ruling Clergy of any Proteſtant Nation; as will ingage the moſt Ingenious among the ſaid Clergy to return ſolemn thanks-givings to God for this third part of Naked Truth.

Secondly, the Naked Truth is made ſo conſpicuous, with reference to that which

is the true glory of Protestants in opposition to Popery, as hath never yet been done by any Pen.

Thirdly, the Naked Truth is so, and in such a manner displayed, as the Filthiness and the Odiousness of the Scarlet-Whore is made so Patent, and Bare, as may tend to the opening of the Eyes of the Kings of the Earth, and of every ordinary and intelligent Person, as may work in them a loathing, and a detestation of her as Rev. 17. 16. *is said shall be wrought,*

And it may be hoped, that this very Discourse may prove to be such a Mirror or Looking-Glass, to as many of that Scarlet Generation (that are related to the Scarlet-Whore, whose great thirstiness for Blood is so notoriously made manifest, both formerly and lately) as will but give themselves leave seriously to look upon their own odious Pictures, I say this Mirror may so discover to them, so much of their own Shame, as they never saw before, as possibly may work in them a loathing of themselves, and a true Repentance of their evil Ways, which have not been good, according to Ezek. 36. 31. *and may ingage them to joyn with Protestants to hate the Whore and to make her desolate and naked, and to burn her with fire.*

For we have great ground to hope that the discoveries of naked Truth more and more, will tend to the inlightening of all Nations professing Christianity, both Protestant and Papistical, (for some Protestants have in some things erred also,) and to the Conversion of both from the Errors of their ways, and to the bringing of all dissenting Parties to that sincere Love one to another, and that true Peace one with another, that becomes the Gospel. Even to that perfect Unity of the Faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to which he hath determined to bring his Church in due time, (which time may be near even at the door.) To which all true Christians, (whatever their present Errors and Weaknesses may be,) will in Sincerity say, Amen *and* Amen.

The

The Glory of

PROTESTANTS,

And the Shame of

PAPISTS.

HAving for ſome time laboured and travelled with deſire of Soul, to bring forth thoſe things that have been given to me, which may tend to Peace and Unity, I ſhall in this ſhort Diſcourſe only touch at ſome few things in order thereunto. And the firſt thing that I ſhall humbly preſent to the Conſideration of the Proteſtant Churches, both at home and abroad is, That as the buſineſs of the Chriſtian Religion is now a thing not capable to be ſeparated from an Affair of State: ſo conſidered as ſuch, it is far more difficult for a Proteſtant Prince upon ſome accounts to govern it, than for a Popiſh Prince, and that for the following Reaſon: which difficulty when the Reaſon is conſidered, may eaſily be remedied, according to that Maxim, Take away the Cauſe and the Effect ceaſeth.

The Reaſon or Cauſe of this difficulty, I ſhall here therefore endeavour to lay open, and to manifeſt with all plainneſs and clearneſs. I ſay therefore that the reaſon of this Difficulty is becauſe the Prince having the Character or Repute only of a Secular Authority, hath not that immediate Influence upon Religion it ſelf, or upon Religious People, which the Clergy hath; for as it is not to be expected that a Prince ſhould have that knowledge, ſo neither is it poſſible that he ſhould be any way ſo Converſant in, or ſo attendant upon the Affairs, Controverſies, and Diſputes which do relate to Religion, as the Clergy may.

And by reaſon of this, Though a Prince may in other things have never ſo great an ability of Judgment,

And though he be never ſo Abſolute or Supreme; Yet he is denied the Right of this Judgment, *as to the Matters of Religion*, in regard that this is appropriated ſolely to the Clergy.

And the Clergy taking upon them the ſole right of Judgment, in all Religious and all Eccleſiaſtical Affairs, do by this means preſume, *That their judgment alone is to be received by the Prince, whenſoever they ſee it reaſonable to deſire his Authority, to Confirm and Aſſent to ſuch things in Religion, as they would have confirmed and aſſented unto;*

And whenſoever they on the contrary, ſhall deſire his nulling and repreſſing ſuch things, as they properly diſlike, and would have nulled and repreſſed by him.

And ſeeing all ſuch Repreſentations, when at any time made by the Clergy, are not only the eaſier, but the ſooner gained by them, becauſe of the entire truſt that in the whole affair of Religion, is generally committed to them, as to Perſons not only of ſuppoſed ſufficiency, but of ſuppoſed Conſcience and Integrity. And becauſe there can be no third party therefore, that hath a power to examine the things propounded by them, or to ſift into the grounds or reaſons of them.

They are the more eaſie to be gained alſo, becauſe of the Power and Influence which all pretences about Religion, do commonly and rationally carry with them, with reference to the publick Peace, and to the eſtabliſhment of Piety, and to the procuring both of Proſperity, and of bleſſing upon a Nation it ſelf. Which things being generally apprehended and believed by all, to be the real Conſequences of Religion;

Nothing therefore can render a Prince more plauſible, or to ſpeak more properly,

Nothing renders a Prince more naturally grateful, to the hearts, or more inwardly awful and reverend to the mind and affections of his people, than the Suppoſition of his being Religious or pious doth.

And therefore all Propoſitions about Religion, having this advantage above all others of any kind whatſoever; no marvel if they gain a more eaſie reception with any Government, than any other Propoſition can.

Eſpecially if offered by ſuch, who claim the main care and charge of all things which concern Religion, and concern the welfare of it, as well as they challenge the chiefeſt knowledge and judgment about it.

For

For theſe reaſons therefore, and for the purchaſing and the conſerving ſuch a name among his people, as may become a Prince that would juſtly be accounted Pious, and for the avoiding the Blemiſh and Imputation of the contrary, a Prince is oft-times induced through the inſtant requeſt and importunity of the Clergy, both to diſpence with, and yield to ſuch things, which otherwiſe if duly examined, would neither be judged ſutable, nor perhaps conſiſtent with his Dignity, either to do or to grant.

So that though it be a thing for thoſe reaſons very plain, That a Prince cannot in the affairs of Religion, eaſily decline the Judgment and Repreſentation of the Clergy: yet nothing is more certain than this,

That their Judgments and their Counſels prove ſometimes, not only impoſing but very dangerous both To his Government, To his Safety, To his Honour, and to his Intereſt.

And the more, becauſe as the riſe of their Advice doth often proceed, (if not for the moſt part) from thoſe Conſiderations and no other, wherein their own intereſt as a Clergy is particularly, and ſometimes privately concerned: ſo the end of their advice terminates many times, in nothing elſe beyond this.

That due Care and juſt Conſideration, which is but fit to be had to their Princes Intereſt, being either not ſo faithfully, or uprightly, or at leaſt not ſo circumſpectly minded by them as it ought.

For the Proof of which, we may appeal even to matter of Fact, there being not one or two but rather too too many Precedents to be found, wherein the Advice which the Clergy hath given to Princes, hath been ſo precipitate and raſh, that Princes to avoid thoſe miſchiefs that have followed from their Counſels, (and doubting leſt other and farther inconveniences might inſue upon them that might be worſe) have been forced oft-times to reſcind their own Orders, though to the leſſenning of the Credit and Authority of their Government.

Yea not only ſo, but through the importunity of the Clergy, and through the raſhneſs and unſeaſonableneſs of their Counſels, it is not one Prince, but ſeveral Princes, that have been frequently intangled, Either with Diviſions and Diſſentions at home among their own Subjects, or with quarrels abroad among their Neighbours, not only to the diſquiet of their Government, To the Ruine of many antient Families, To the ſhedding of much

innocent Blood, and to the waſte and conſumption of an extream Maſs of Treaſures: but which is yet worſe, to the doing of all this without any Fruit, and to the giving over (at length) the very quarrel it ſelf, even for theſe very Reaſons, *viz.*

Becauſe they ſaw they were miſled in it, and were able to effect none of thoſe ends, which others propounded to them by it, and which they propounded to themſelves, than which nothing can render a Prince more unfortunate, to the eye of himſelf or of others: which unfortunateneſs by their ingaging in quarrels relating to Religion, hath nevertheleſs happened not only to Princes of ordinary, but to Princes of extraordinary Wiſdom, Courage, and Conduct.

Witneſs the ill ſucceſs of *Charles* the Fifth, in his War upon the Princes of *Germany*.

And of his Son *Philip* the Second of *Spain*, in his attempt upon the *Netherlands*.

And witneſs alſo three Kings of *France*, one after another.

And witneſs, what is not fit to be particularized, even thoſe things that happened at home even in our own Countrey; which have drawn a Mourning-Veil upon the Records of our own times.

And yet ſo untractable have the Clergy been at ſome Times, and in ſome Places or Countries, that if a Prince ſhall refuſe their Advice (though out of judgment) or ſhall oppoſe the unreaſonableneſs of their Counſels, though never ſo juſtly, They do hereupon, not only meet and Herd among themſelves, but partly by Preaching, partly by Writing, and partly by other ways of negotiating, they do Endeavour to gain to themſelves, both the greateſt Perſons and the greateſt part of the Nation, even to prevent the effects of this Judgment, Prudence, and Moderation.

And if theſe things we have now ſaid have any Weight or Truth at all in them, they will evidence the Deductions following to be as true and as certain, viz.

1 That the Affair of Religion is of too active a nature to lye wholly neglected, and unregarded by any Government.

2 That none can have a principal hand in the Government of it, but they muſt have the principal power and opportunity through it, to affect the people more than any other, either in the point of Obligation, or in the point of Neglect and Diſreſpect.

3 That this muſt be much more true and certain in ſuch a Nation,

Nation, where the Peoples Zeal and Affections do run moſt ſtrongly of any to Religion, (as in theſe Nations) than it is or can be true, in any other Nations whatever.

4 That whoever will weigh it, muſt find the Clergy therefore ſingly for this Reaſon, even becauſe of their meer Calling and Relation to Religion, to be conſiderable in every Nation both for Power and Intereſt.

5 That though they dare not meerly becauſe of their Calling, any way challenge an Order or Superiority above the Prince, nor can : Yet they are by conſequence always made Independent upon the Prince, and ſometimes abſolute over the Prince, when the Prince himſelf ſhall intirely, and without any check commit the Affairs of the whole Church and Religion to them.

Becauſe if they govern Religion well, and intirely according to the Peoples ſatisfaction, they muſt unavoidably draw and ingage the very Souls, Hearts and Conſciences of the People to them, and that by the firmeſt, ſtrongeſt, and moſt laſting Tye of any, which is that of their Minds, and Affections, and of the Duty they owe unto God.

If on the contrary they Rule the Affair of Religion wholly and perfectly to the Diſguſt, Oppreſſion, or Bondage of the people, they muſt of neceſſity as much diſguſt the Government ; though not for it ſelf, yet becauſe of that abſolute Authority which it maintains and upholds in the Clergy.

6 That the committing the Affairs of Religion and of the Church intirely to the Clergy without any check at all upon them, is yet the more againſt the Intereſt of the Prince,becauſe it layeth an expreſs Temptation upon them,to Govern both the Church and Religion abſolutely, and at their own Will, and conſequently to govern Religion with much leſs Care, Heed, Circumſpection, and Moderation, than otherwiſe they would have done.

7 While the Clergy govern the Affairs of the Church and of Religion abſolutely, and by their own Will, without any Check whatever upon them, The Prince himſelf neither hath nor can have the leaſt ſecurity, that they will not Govern all things directly agreeable to their own Intereſt, and to their private and particular Concern, let that Intereſt with the Means beſt to effect it, be never ſo diſtinct, to the Intereſt of the Prince, or to the Intereſt of the People; or never ſo deſtructive or contrary to either.

8 That it is leſs adviſeable for a Proteſtant Prince to commit the Affairs of the Church, and of Religion abſolutely and entirely to the Clergy, than it is for any other Prince. Becauſe the Clergy are by this, without any Head at all over them, and without any Council whatever that is ſuperiour to them, (which they are not under the Papiſts themſelves) and becauſe the Prince, muſt by this means inevitably ſubject himſelf to their Advice, and to the Effect of it, let the Iſſue of it prove never ſo inconvenient or raſh to him, as is manifeſt from the Examples before mentioned.

9. That it is the leſs adviſeable alſo for a Proteſtant Prince than for any other Prince, Becauſe it is not only againſt the Example of *Holland*, but againſt the Example of all the Proteſtant Princes that were Inſtrumental in the firſt Reformation, and of moſt of their Succeſſors.

10. That as it muſt be utterly againſt the Intereſt of a Prince to take part with the Clergy, when ruling of Religion wholly and perfectly to the diſguſt of the People: ſo it muſt recommend him, not olny to the Judgments, but to the Minds, Hearts and Affections of the People, even beyond what any thing elſe hath a power to do, if he ſhall pleaſe, more eſpecially at ſuch a time as that is, to gratifie them with the ſence of his own Care of them. And there cannot well be a greater Seaſon, and Opportunity put into the hand of any Prince, either to Honour himſelf, or to oblige a People, and to oblige them to him in ſtrictneſs by all Ties that are poſſible to be laid in Gratitude or Conſcience upon them; Than for a Prince to take the Affairs of Religion, or of the Church, into his own hand at ſuch a time, as they have moſt miſcarried in the hand of the Clergy.

And to manifeſt to his people that it is his fixed reſolution, to defend that which is the Foundation of Proteſtantiſm, and which is the true glory of it, in oppoſition to the Popiſh Religion, of which I ſhall now more particularly diſcourſe.

The Glory of the Proteſtant Religion is,

That by the Reformation there was a reſtoration of the Scriptures, in the Vulgar Tongue, as well to the common people as to any others, and this was one main part of the Reformation, if not the chiefeſt of any that came by the Reformation it ſelf, and it is the true glory of it, without which any thing elſe that came by the Reformation could have been but of little advantage to us.

And

And if a Proteſtant Prince do aſſure his people, that he will maintain and defend this Principle, or Foundation of Proteſtantiſm, This will, and muſt firmly and ſtrongly ingage all the Hearts and Affections of his Proteſtant Subjects unto him.

But whether the Prince will defend and maintain this Principle or not, yet it is unavoidable: That all Proteſtants as well in all other Nations beyond the Seas where any Proteſtants are as well as in theſe three Kingdoms, do irreſiſtably cleave to this Principle, *viz. That by the Reformation the free uſe of the Scripture is reſtored to all people*, And this Principle being fixed in them, it hath theſe four following Effects.

The firſt Effect.

1. That no man or men (that no party of the Clergy or any other) ſhall ever be able to remove the influence, which *the Divine Authority of the Scripture* muſt have, and cannot but have, upon the Minds and Conſciences of the People profeſſing the Proteſtant Religion, as the Scriptures are acknowledged to be.

The ONLY Word, the ALONE Rule of the mind of God unto his People.

This Character or Apprehenſion of *the Dignity and Authority of the Scriptures*, being ſo Eſſential to our Reformation it ſelf, that there is no Proteſtant can ſo much as doubt of it. It being that which is not only commonly taught in our Pulpits, but frequently inculcated to us, while we are Children by our Parents, and by thoſe Maſters which take the Care of us while we are at School.

The Second Effect.

And ſecondly, this Principle of *the Divine Authority of the Scriptures*, being from our very Education thus firmly rooted in us, it muſt make the influence of it to be equally as ſtrong, and equally as powerful upon the Conſciences of us, even as the Scriptures themſelves are, which is equal with *the very Authority of God himſelf*: and eſpecially upon all ſuch as are religiouſly Educated and Bred: ſo that there is no Obligation or Tye whatever,

which is capable to be laid upon men upon any civil,outward, or temporal Account, that is able to have any part of that ſtrength, or influence upon them,as the Scriptures muſt neceſſarily have upon, and over the generallity of all Perſons in the Proteſtant Church : which is a ſecond Effect, which can never be removed by any Authority of man whatſoever.

The ſtrength and prevalency of which Tye as made upon the Conſciences of all Perſons as Proteſtants, by or from the Scripture, is yet the more conſiderable, becauſe whatever Worſhip, Service,or Religion we as Proteſtants do profeſs to give unto God, we profeſs it only from the Authority of the Scriptures themſelves, and from the Authority of them, as they are thus owned and profeſſed by the Proteſtant Church to be our Supreme : and (conſequently) our immediate Tye in all that we believe, and in all that we act as Proteſtants towards God which hath not its Termination in, or its dependance ſo much upon men, or upon the Ruling Clergy, or upon the Church, as upon the Scripture or Word of God it ſelf.

We judging it lawful enough to forſake the Church, when we once judge the Church in what it believes, or in what it acts, or practiſeth toward God to have forſaken his Word.

And our Profeſſion or Religion being thus founded, I mean *out of Conſcience purely to Gods Word* : Every man then, properly as a Proteſtant, if he be Sincere, doth as much believe that the Worſhip (whatever it be that he profeſſeth) is as truly agreeable to the Mind and Will of God,as is the very Scripture it ſelf. And conſequently that he is as much to contend for the ſaid Worſhip,as he is bound to contend for the Authority of the Scripture it ſelf : For theſe two being taken by him but for one thing, (*viz.* the Truth and Authority of the Scripture , and the Truth and Authority of what he profeſſeth,) conſequently the ſame Tye that binds him to the Scripture, muſt of neceſſity bind him to that Religion whatever it be, which he as a Proteſtant profeſſeth unto God. And conſequently if there be no Tye ſo firm or ſo ſtrong upon the Conſcience, *as that of the Divine and Abſolute Authority of the Scripture is* : There can be no Tye ſtronger than what Proteſtants

ſtants as ſuch (and as Sincere) muſt neceſſarily have for the Religion, whatever it be that they do reſpectively profeſs unto God.

The Third Effect.

And Thirdly, This now being made clear and undoubted, *viz.* That the Tye and Obligation that every man hath to the Worſhip which he profeſſeth unto God, properly as a Proteſtant lyeth in, and riſeth immediately from the Scriptures. And it being likewiſe cleared that the higheſt Tye which can poſſibly be laid upon the Conſcience of any man, is that proceeding from the Scriptures, as they are *The* ONLY *Rule of God's Mind and Will to us.*

It muſt neceſſarily follow, that if the Authority of men can neither remove the Uſe of the Scriptures themſelves, nor remove the Obligation which they have above all things upon the Conſciences of men, even from their very Education, as they are *The only Rule of God's Mind*, then no Authority of man, can ever poſſibly remove the Obedience which men will always conceive themſelves obliged to give to the ſaid Word, in whatever it be they apprehend it doth clearly command. Seeing this Obedience is looked upon to be the ſame, (and no other) with an Obedience given to God himſelf.

And if an Obedience given unto God, be in Conſcience alſo infinitely preferrable to any Obedience to man, then muſt an Obligation to the immediate Law and Will of God, be always preferrable to, and ſtronger than any Obligation whatever, to the Law or Command of men, which is a third unavoidable Effect of it.

The Fourth Effect.

And Fourthly, if the Law of the Church, or of the Ruling Clergy, cannot in the matter of Worſhip any way compel or bind men to Obedience, farther or otherwiſe than as they apprehend it to be agreeable to *the Law of God*, or to *the Law of his Word*: Then neither can the Law of the Prince, or the Law of the Civil Government bind mens Conſciences, in the matter of Worſhip, further or otherwiſe than the Law of the Church, *viz.* no otherwiſe, than as the ſaid Law ſhall appear to them to be agreeable to Gods Law, which is *the Law of his Scripture or Word.*

And conſequently it can never be avoided by any Proteſtant Prince, but his Authority as relating purely to things Civil, with the Efficacy of it, muſt ſtand *upon one Rule;*

And his Authority as relating to things of Divine Worſhip, with the Efficacy of it, muſt neceſſarily and unavoidably ſtand *upon another Rule.*

And therefore that his Authority over his Subjects in the one, and in the other of theſe, muſt of neceſſity be diſtinguiſhed. Which is the fourth thing that we ſay cannot in any Proteſtant Government poſſibly be prevented. That theſe four things are the certain Effects, of that which is the Main part, or the Chiefeſt Privilege of any that came by the Reformation it ſelf before mentioned, may be further and more fully demonſtrated thus.

For if no Law can poſſibly Eradicate that Notion, *That there is a God* : Then no endeavour of man whatever, can hinder his being worſhipped, by ſuch at leaſt as have a ſence of his being, *and do verily believe that* HE IS.

Wherefore, if we are trained up from our Childhood, and trained up not only as men, but as Proteſtants, firmly to believe that God will accept of no other Worſhip at all from us as Chriſtians, but what is agreeable to his Word. And if it be a thing continually inculcated to us even from our very Infancy,

That it is in a Conformity to this Word alone, that all Religion whatever doth conſiſt ;

Then it is not Reaſon only, but Experience it ſelf, which atteſts it, That a man may as ſoon quit his Notion that there is a God, or be affraid to own it.

And may aſſoon quit the Notion that God is to be worſhipped, or be affraid to own it.

As he may quit or be affraid to own (as he is a Proteſtant) this Notion, *viz. That God is ſo only to be worſhipped, and no otherwiſe than he hath ſet down in his Word.*

And if this Notion then about *his Word, as the only Rule of the Worſhip of God,* be as firmly planted in us by our Education, as any Notion can be planted in us, that belongs to our nature as men : It muſt needs follow, that a Government may as well, and with as good ſucceſs, hope or propound to it ſelf by a Law, to extinguiſh common Notions, as hope or propound to it ſelf by a Law, to extinguiſh among any Proteſtant Nation, the Notion of the neceſſity of Worſhipping God according to his Word.

And

And therefore if it be rightly conſidered it will likewiſe appear: That it muſt be to him that is truly educated as a Proteſtant, every way as grievous to be commanded by a Law to forſake Chriſtianity it ſelf, as to be commanded by a Law to forſake that Worſhip, which he as a Proteſtant cannot but believe in his heart, is alone agreeable to the Mind and Law of God, which is that Worſhip that is given to God directly conformable to his Scripture or Word. And of the Truth of this the Martyrs in Queen Maries *time are a competent Witneſs.*

And conſequently they that pretend to take another Meaſure of Proteſtantiſm, than according to what is thus firmly rooted in the hearts of men, both by their Education, and by the very Principles and Doctrine of the Reformation, do ſeem but to prevaricate only with the reformed Religion, and with the ſixth Article of the Church of *England*, and do if not in Words, yet in Actions ſeem manifeſtly to declare, that they neither really believe the Scriptures, or the Chriſtian Religion, or the Reformation to be of God.

For if the whole of the Chriſtian Religion be contained in the Scripture, and in the Scripture alone, as the ſixth Article of the Church of *England* doth both plainly and expreſly confeſs it is: Then to make the rule of the Word to be our rule wholly as Chriſtians in the Worſhip of God, is ſo far from an Obſtencie, and ſo far from any thing of Humour or Superſtition, or Conceitedneſs, that the contrary can be no way diſpenſable, and much leſs maintainable before God: and therefore there is neither any part of Popery it ſelf, nor any thing of Idolatry, though never ſo groſs, but it may be as eaſily impoſed upon, and as eaſily entertained by a Proteſtant, as any worſhip may; which he evidently ſeeth, or is ſufficiently perſwaded of in his Conſcience to be againſt the Mind of God, or againſt *the Rule of his Word.*

Seeing it is *This Rule* that is the only Index of his Mind as to us, and it is *This Rule* alone, to which all the Promiſes of God are intirely made, and all the Promiſes of God being made to

This Rule only; *This Rule*, and no other, muſt then as we are Chriſtians, be *The alone Foundation* both of all our hope, and of all our truſt toward God. And muſt conſequently be the only ground upon which we can as Chriſtians have any expectation of Salvation and Life. And therefore the whole Intereſt, and Concern of our Souls, (at leaſt as we are Proteſtants) doth, and muſt ſtand entirely upon *the ſaid Word*. Which things if they cannot poſſibly any way be denyed,

Then the diſobeying of all ſuch Laws in the matter of Worſhip, as are NOT agreeable to *The Word of God*, or which at leaſt appear not to be ſo, is a thing wholly inevitable, and is impoſſible to be avoided in a Proteſtant Government; even as we are rational perſons, becauſe there is a threefold reaſon that neceſſarily impels it.

Firſt as it hath its riſe from that moſt forcible and indeleable Character which is writ in the Minds of all men; which is, *That ſeeing GOD IS, HE ought to be worſhipped in ſome manner or another of neceſsity.*

Secondly, as it hath its riſe from *that Character* which hath equal force with the other in the Minds of us; as we are bred Proteſtants, *viz. That God is no other way to be worſhipped, nor will accept of any other worſhip from us (as Chriſtians) but what is agreeable to his Word.* Which two Principles, ſeeing by vertue of our Education they make but one indeed in our hearts, as we are Proteſtants they do and muſt conſtrain us aſſoon to abandon all worſhip it ſelf unto God, as to abandon that worſhip which is properly agreeable to his Word. Becauſe ſo far as we abandon this, we do abandon all Worſhip that is according to our Principles as Proteſtants, either acceptable with God, or agreeable to the Mind of God.

Wherefore if to theſe two we ſhall add the third ground of its riſe, which is as certain alſo as either of the other, *viz. That we neither have hope in God, nor any Promiſes made us by God further than as we obey him in his Word, or further than as we worſhip him according to the Rule of it.*

I ſay theſe three things being now joyntly conſidered, and ſeriouſly weighed by us: what man is there, or what man can there be, who firmly believes that there is any ſuch thing as Salvation and Life, who will not run any hazard rather than forbear what he judgeth to be the Worſhip of God? or rather than he will obſerve ſuch a Worſhip unto God as he cannot but know,

know, or cannot at leaſt but verily believe to be contrary to his Mind, and contrary to the Rule of his Word.

If it be evil then, for any man to believe that God is indiſpenſibly to be worſhipped after ſome manner or another, or evil for a man to believe that there is no other rule of his Will or Mind to us as we are Chriſtians but his Word, and therefore no other Rule wherein his Worſhip is contained beſides his Word.

Or if it be evil to expect that God will moſt truly, faithfully, and fully perform his Promiſes to us, if we ſhall ſerve him according to his Word, and not otherwiſe,

I ſay if any of theſe three things are evil, then it may be evil to diſobey any Law relating to the Worſhip of God though it be not agreeable to his Word. But if none of theſe things be evil in themſelves, they can never make any man evil who ſimply conforms to them, I ſay not ſimply for his conformity how ſtrictly or intirely ſo ever it be.

And therefore if theſe three Principles are of ſuch a nature, as creates a neceſſity of our compliance with them, even as we are rational perſons, we muſt either then remove the Principles themſelves, and the lawfulneſs of them, or we muſt unavoidably ſuffer and permit their efficacy as lawful over men. For to allow the Principles themſelves as good, and lawful, and as neceſſary and indiſpenſible in themſelves, and to diſallow nevertheleſs the Practice of them; or to diſallow ſuch perſons as follow them and imbrace them, and to account ſuch perſons to be only diſturbers, or to be men ſo evil and bad as that they are not fit to be tolerated in a Nation, even though no Crime beſides this be objected againſt them: Is either groſly to prevaricate with the ſaid Principles, and to make but a mock or ſport of them, or it is to do that which is abſolutely repugnant, abſurd, and contradictory in it ſelf: which is wholly againſt the Reaſon and Nature of a man as a man.

For though it cannot be maintained, that all the Laws of men muſt or ought neceſſarily to ariſe out of the Laws of God, *viz.* either that of his Word, or that Law written in the heart of man, Yet it is maintained among all Chriſtian Governments whatever,

That no Law of the Civil Magiſtrate hath any power to ſuperſede any Law of God, whether it be that writ in the heart of man, or that writ in his Word, and therefore it is univerſally agreed by all Go-

vernments, and cannot be denyed by any that profeſs Chriſtianity, *That all humane Laws if they be inconſiſtent either with any of thoſe common Principles that are writ in our Nature, (which are called the common Principles of Reaſon) or with any thing that is expreſly writ in the Word of God, They are null and void in themſelves. Becauſe they are againſt a prior or preceding Obligation, which all men as men have by Nature unto God, as unto their Supreme Lord and Creator.*

Wherefore in as much as it is clear, that all Laws which command men to forbear that Worſhip, which they as Proteſtants do in their hearts judge, and believe to be agreeable to the Mind, Will, and Word of God, or which commands them to conform to ſuch a Worſhip, as they judge according to their own Underſtandings (and connot but believe it) to be diſagreeable to the ſaid Mind, Will, and Word of God, are of this nature: that is,

Firſt, they are ſuch Laws as have a manifeſt Inconſiſtency either with the Law writ in the heart it ſelf, which is, That God is indiſpenſably to be worſhipped in ſome manner or another, Or,

Secondly, they are ſuch Laws as have an Inconſiſtency with the Law writ in the Word of God, which is, That he will reward all ſuch as ſhall obey him according to the Rule which he hath given them in his ſaid Word, and will puniſh ſuch as ſhall do the contrary. Or,

Thirdly, they are ſuch Laws as have an Inconſiſtency with the Rule of the Reformation it ſelf, which is, that all Worſhip which is Chriſtian, and fœderal, is to be given to God *according to the Scriptures*, and that whatever IS NOT read in the Scriptures, nor may be proved by the Scripture, IS NOT to be required of any man that it ſhould be believed as an Article of Faith. Which are the very words of the ſixth Article of the Church of *England*, (and which Article if wounded, the reſt of the thirty nine Articles muſt be wounded equally with it, ſeeing they are judged to be founded mainly upon it,) I do therefore with all humbleneſs ſay, that all ſuch Laws (in any Proteſtant Government whatever) which reſtrain ſuch a Worſhip as is agreeable to the Word of God, or is really believed to be ſuch by them that practiſe it, I ſay all ſuch Laws are entirely againſt that *Prior Law* or *preceding Obligation*, which men as men have by Nature indiſpenſably unto God, as to their Immediate Creator and Lord, above

any

any which they have or can have unto man, how lawfully ſoever he may be the Superior of them.

And conſequently, that all Non-obedience or Non-conformity to any of the ſaid Laws, though it be in a ſence voluntary, yet it is neither elective nor indeed truly or properly free, And therefore that ſuch Non-obedience is not any the leaſt breach of affection, Nor any the leaſt forfeiture of a mans Duty to his Prince, or to the Government, Becauſe it is a Non-conformity or Diſobedience that is abſolutely conſtrained, compelled, and of an inevitable and indiſpenſible nature in its ſelf, by reaſon of the *Prior Law* or of the preceding, and indiſpenſible Obligation which we have both as Men and as Chriſtians unto God; And have above and beyond any Obligation that we have, or can have poſſibly to any perſon as the Prince or Superior of us.

And all men that maintain the contrary, and that either out of a Luxury of Wit, or out of a Super-fœtation of Vanity, Inſolency, or Pride do ſeek to baffle this Argument, or to evade the force of it, from or under the pretence of the Capriciouſneſs, Humourſomneſs, and affectation of Singularity that may be in ſome Perſons; may with as good Reaſon, and with as ſolid a Judgment make a meer Mock or Ridicule of all the *Martyrs* that have ever been ſince the World ſtood, and may as well call *Daniel*, and the *three Children*, and all the *Primitive Chriſtians*, and the *Apoſtles* who ſuffered for God, and for the Teſtimony of his Word, and of Chriſt, *Revel.* 6. 9. *Revel.* 1. 9. men that were only capricious, humourous, and perſons that did affect a Singularity, as call all men ſo at this Day, whoever they are that do not conform to the Laws Nationally made about Worſhip and Religion:

For if their bare Allegation that all men that do not conform, are men only of humorous, and capricious Tempers, and men who meerly affect a Singularity and Diſturbance; ſhall be taken for a ſufficient Evidence againſt them.

By as juſt a Law, the Teſtimony of any Atheiſt, may as well be taken againſt all the *Martyrs* that ever were. And the Teſtimony of any common Perſon, may be taken againſt them themſelves (that alledge this,) that they are *Atheiſts*. And if this laſt be not reaſonable, neither is the firſt. For if anothers bare Allegation is not to be taken againſt them, nor ought to be allowed as an Evidence, So neither is their bare ſaying to be taken againſt others.

By all that I have ſaid then, it will appear that there is a clear difference, between the Authority of a Prince in things Civil, and in things relating to Worſhip and Religion.

For as a Princes Authority in things Civil is unqueſtionable, and enterferes with no Law of God whatever, and can have no pretence therefore to intrench upon the Conſcience, or upon any prior Obligation or Duty that a man oweth unto God, and as it muſt for all theſe Reaſons be neceſſarily and indiſpenſably obeyed, and ſubmitted unto by all his Subjects;

So on the contrary, a Prince, eſpecially as a Proteſtant can put out no Law about Divine Worſhip, but his Subjects ſo far as they are Proteſtants, are bound in Conſcience and by the very Principles of that Religion which they profeſs, not only to Conſider it, But to Examine it, whether it be agreeable to the Word of God or not, and if it appear not to be ſuch (at leaſt according to the beſt of their Underſtandings,) As they will have a Plea always not to ſubmit to it, by Reaſon it intrencheth upon a Prior Obligation; So this Plea cannot well with Juſtice be denyed them, if no Crime whatever in their Converſation can be proved againſt them. NOR can men in this Caſe be actually puniſhed, and proceeded againſt without the Sence and Grief of that Wrong, or Oppreſſion that is manifeſtly done to them, and ſuffered by them, eſpecially ſeeing their Non-conformity to the ſaid Laws, proceeds not as we ſaid, either from their Election or Liberty. Nor yet from any breach of Duty or Affection to their Prince: But only from what appears to them to be an Inevitable,or Indiſpenſable Neceſſity that ariſeth, and is occaſioned from their meer Profeſſion as they are of the Proteſtant Religion. To this end I ſhall therefore offer one Argument more which ſhall be taken from,

The Character of a Papiſt.

The thing which doth Eſſentially diſtinguiſh a Proteſtant from a Papiſt, more than any Note, Mark, or Character whatever beſides, is, *That a Papiſt by his Principles as a Papiſt* may not, and indeed cannot diſpute any Law whatever, relating to the Worſhip or Service of God, provided it be declared and eſtabliſhed by what he acknowledgeth to be the Church: Becauſe he takes the Authority of the Church for the whole Argument, or for the

the only Foundation of all his Obedience unto God; rather than the Divine Authority of the Scripture or Word. And becauſe he preſumeth the Church alſo to be a thing altogether Holy, and ſuch as neither hath Erred, nor can Err, for ſhould he queſtion this, he muſt queſtion the whole of his Religion it ſelf: oppoſite to which Character, we ſhall now conſider,

The Character of a Proteſtant.

But the Proteſtant Church on the other hand, having ſeparated from the Church of *Rome*, not only upon the Suppoſition that ſhe hath actually Erred, but that ſhe hath been groſly corrupted as well in Manners as in Faith. And the Proteſtant Church having for the better Juſtification of her own Practice, both in the matter of Worſhip, and in all things relating to Doctrine, and Faith, SET UP *The Scriptures as the Sole and Soveraign Rule of Gods Mind and Will to his Church*: As ſhe cannot challenge the Exerciſe of any Authority therefore, that is beyond that of the Scripture; or any that is not ſubordinate to the ſaid Scripture it ſelf: So it is expected that all the Duties which ſhe requires, and all thoſe Articles or Points of Faith which ſhe at any time recommends, to ſuch as are the Members of her, ſhould always be enforced from thoſe Arguments properly, and only, which are drawn from the Scripture: Becauſe it is this, which ſhe her ſelf hath appealed unto, and this only which ſhe challengeth to juſtifie her.

A Proteſtant then, that underſtands the Grounds of his Religion, or that hath been at all inſtructed in the Riſe or Principles of the Reformation, taking this for the very firſt Article of his Faith; *That a Church may Err*, and may have Corruption in it, and may in its Worſhip poſſibly ſwerve, and depart from the pure Mind, Word, and Wiſdom of God: And laying that no leſs firmly as the Foundation of his Belief on the other hand, *viz. That the Scripture cannot Err*, nor can be other than the unalterable, and incorruptible Rule of Gods Law, and of his Will and Mind to his People, he cannot poſſibly hold the Authority of the Church to be Divine, any further or otherwiſe, than *as it appears to be clearly grounded upon the Scriptures as the Word of God.* And therefore the Tye or Obligation which he hath to obey the Church, ſo far as it relates to the Conſcience, and

binds the Conſcience, ariſeth out of no other Ground, than from the Conformity which he ſeeth, or is perſwaded that the ſaid Church hath in her Laws, Orders and Doctrines to the ſaid Word, and if this Conformity doth or ſhall once ceaſe in the ſaid Church, a Proteſtant as a Proteſtant, cannot but judge his Tye or Obligation to her as a Church ought to ceaſe alſo with it.

And this being the true State of that Radical or Eſſential Difference that is between the Principles of a Proteſtant, and the Principles of a Papiſt as a Papiſt,

It will hence follow,

That if a Church that profeſſeth her ſelf to be Proteſtant (or the Ruling Clergy of a Proteſtant Church) ſhall not much conſider, or regard the juſtifying of what Laws, and Orders ſhe makes by the Conſonancy they expreſly have, to the Law or Mind of God in his Word, (which is his Rule to the Church) nor ſhall much concern it ſelf to clear, and inforce the Faith and Doctrine which ſhe holds, by the Evidence of its Truth, or by the Authority of it, as ſufficiently grounded upon that Word that is abſolutely Divine: But ſhall on the contrary, in whatever ſhe Commands or in the things ſhe Teacheth, conſtrain or exact an Obedience from her Members to her ſelf, and to her own Authority as abſolute, and as unſubordinate to the Word of God, and therefore to her Authority as it is a diſtinct thing from the ſaid Word: That Church, (or the Clergy rather, that are the Rulers of it) ſo far as ſhe doth this in any Doctrine, or in any Law that ſhe makes indiſpenſable, doth ſo far ceaſe in her Principles and Practice to be Proteſtant: and doth ſo far diſclaim not only a main and chief Ground of her Separation from the Church of *Rome*; but the very Principle it ſelf, upon which ſhe pretends to guide her ſelf, in her Reformation.

For it cannot be denyed that theſe were the great, and the main Cauſes of our Separation from the Church of *Rome*, *viz.*

Firſt, Becauſe ſhe had made her ſelf Abſolute, and had ſet up an Authority in the matters of Worſhip and Faith, above that of the Scriptures, as the only Word of God. And

Secondly, Becauſe ſhe did not barely excommunicate men, but did alſo perſecute them, and did deprive them both of their Eſtates, Liberties,

Liberties, and Lives upon a Principle as contrary to humane Reaſon, as it was contrary to humane Society, and Quiet: *viz.* not for any evil in their Converſations, in their Morals, or in their Lives: But meerly for obeying what they ſincerely judged to be the Law, Mind, and Will of God. And meerly for believing that his whole Law, Will, and Mind to his Church as a Church, eſpecially relating to the Worſhip of himſelf, was contained in his Word.

Thirdly, Becauſe by this perſecution, as it was extended to the extreme Puniſhment of Perſons, both in their Liberties, and Goods, and ſometimes in their Lives, by ſtinking Priſons and want of Neceſſaries; ſhe did unavoidably draw upon her ſelf the Guilt of mens Apoſtacy, Hypocrſie, and Diſſimulation, who durſt not but obey and comply with her Commands, meerly out of fear. And did as unavoidably draw upon her the Guilt of all that Suffering, Cruelty, and Blood whatever it were ſhe ſpilt, and did inflict upon thoſe perſons who withſtood her Commands, and who were otherwiſe in all things blameleſs, both as to their Morals, Lives, and Converſations.

I ſay if it be matter of Fact, and that which cannot be denyed, that theſe three things, were ſome of the Main, and Principal Cauſes for which we ſeparated from the Church of *Rome*; and for which our firſt Reformers themſelves called her Antichriſtian: and ſometimes Bloody, and ſometimes the Scarlet Whore. And if theſe three things, when at any time mentioned with reference to the Church of *Rome*, are ſtill acknowledged to be evil, and ſo ſtiled to this day, ſo far as it concerns her. Yea if theſe three things, are at this very preſent in our Controverſies with that Church, not only charged upon her, but caſt in her teeth, among many other things by way of reproach, and to ſet forth the juſt ground, that we even as the Church of *England*, (as well as other Churches) have both of exception againſt and hatred of her.

MUST NOT theſe three things be MUCH MORE EVIL in a Proteſtant Church? who after ſhe hath condemned all theſe things, not only as evil but as Antichriſtian in the Church of *Rome*; and after ſhe hath pretended to ſeparate from the ſaid Church for them, doth nevertheleſs give her ſelf leave to practiſe them, without condemning her ſelf at all in them? And MUST NOT This Practice caſt a manifeſt Blemiſh, and Reproach up-

on her own Reformation? and evidence to the world that ſhe doth not either believe the Principles of it, OR doth not at leaſt dare to Truſt to it.

Wherefore if the ſaid Church (or the Clergy rather as the Rulers of it) meerly upon theſe Grounds, and only to theſe ends, which are both thus evil in themſelves, and thus contrary to the very Grounds and Ends of our Reformation, ſhall endeavour to Ingage the power of the Civil Magiſtrate to her Aſſiſtance, (which God forbid they ſhould ever do any more in *England*; for we have good ground to believe that ſeveral of the Ruling Clergy if not all, do abhor it, *to their Praiſe be it ſpoken)* I humbly offer it to Conſideration, whether in moving this to a Prince, eſpecially as he is a Proteſtant, ſhe doth or can move him to any other purpoſe, than *That his Authority may promote the Defection ſhe hath made from her own Principles, and may Countenance her in that, which ſhe knoweth that the Rules of the Reformation, and of Proteſtantiſm cannot*: *viz.* not only her Cruelty and Severity, but her Exorbitancy?

And whether ſhe hath, or can have any Argument to the ſaid Prince, for his Countenancing of her, greater than this, *(viz) Than as ſhe knoweth that all the evil which would be charged upon HER wholly and ONLY as a Church may now through his countenancing of her be in part as well charged upon his Royal Authority and Pleaſure as upon her.* Which Argument being really of no better a nature than this, whether it be therefore reaſonable in it ſelf? or whether it be ſo much as fit or modeſt for the ſaid Church to make? or whether it be agreeable to that Duty, Honor, and Sincerity which ſhe as a Church profeſſeth to owe, and ought at all times uprightly to pay to her Prince, *I humbly leave and ſubmit to the Judgments of all Ingenious Perſons*, and eſpecially when with reference to the Effect of this Motion, it is matter of Fact; that though twenty ſix private Perſons would be thereby gratified, (ſome of whom are men of no Birth, Intereſt, or temporal Eſtate in the Nation) and more than twice ſo many thouſands are greatly grieved, injured, and wronged in their Perſons, and Eſtates, which are equally his Majeſties Subjects as well as they. And many of which are every way Peers to them, for Birth, for Vertue, for Loyalty, for Temperance, for Morality, for Mercy, for Charity, for temporal Eſtates; and even for Learning alſo.

And here it will be neceſſary in the next place, to conſider again

again what it is in theſe reſpects, that we blame the Church of *Rome* for, I mean,

What the Guilt of the Church of Rome *is.*

For either Guilt is a thing of Weight before God, or it is not. And either the Guilt which hath been charged upon the Church of *Rome*, (by reaſon of her Perſecution) by our Reformers firſt; and by many worthy Men of the Church of *England* ſince, is juſtly charged upon her, or it is not.

But if that Guilt be Real, and that it is juſtly charged upon the ſaid Church, It is apparently Criminal two ways,

Firſt, as ſhe through her Perſecution is the cauſe of all that Hypocriſie, Diſſimulation, and Apoſtacy, which men commit for meer fear of her, and by which though out of weakneſs, they do greatly wrong their own Conſcience, and greatly injure their former Profeſſion before God, and know they do ſo, and lye oft-times under trouble of Conſcience all their lives afterward for it.

And ſecondly, ſhe is equally guilty, as ſhe is the cauſe (by reaſon of her Perſecution) of the Sufferings, Diſtreſſes, and great Afflictions, which many particular Perſons, and many Families groan under: by which ſhe occaſions many ſolemn Complaints, Cries, and Appeals to be made unto God, which men who are conſcious to themſelves of their Sincerity towards God, did pour out to him as the Righteous Judge of all perſons.

And if this be *The Guilt of the Church of Rome*, and if we as Proteſtants when we write againſt the Church of *Rome*, do ſay that all the Righteous Prayers, Appeals, and Complaints toGod againſt her ſhall be heard. And that ſhe ſhall anſwer as well for the Crimes of others, as for the Oppreſſions and Wrongs that ſhe hath done to others.

What then can be ſaid, when a Proteſtant Church, or the Clergy rather who are the Rulers of it, ſhall be guilty of the ſame manner of Perſecution, and upon the very ſame unjuſt (or upon more unjuſt) Grounds or Principles that the Popiſh Clergy are? and when by the means of this Perſecution, the ſaid Proteſtant Clergy are the occaſion of many mens Hypocriſie, Diſſimulation, and Deſertion of their Principles, (through weakneſs) to the extreme injury and wrong of their Conſciences; and are the expreſs Cauſe of the Sighs, Sufferings, Groans, and Complaints of divers others, that are poured out in the very bitterneſs of their Souls unto God; and when the ſaid Proteſtant Church, or the Ruling Clergy rather of it, ſhall have no ſence at all of the evil of any of theſe things; nor ſeem to be in the leaſt moved or concerned for them?

Theſe things being conſidered, the Queſtion is, whether any man that is rational, can draw any other Concluſion from them but that,

The ſaid Proteſtant Church, (or the Ruling Clergy of it) do not

believe themſelves at all, when they write againſt the Papiſts for theſe things, and that notwithſtanding they do threaten the Church of *Rome*, with the Judgments of God becauſe of their Cruelty, and of their Perſecutions of men for their Conſcience ſake: yet they do indeed but laugh in their ſleeves at it, and do not believe any ſuch thing, as that the direful Judgments of God ſhall come upon any, either for Cruelty, or for Perſecution of others for Conſcience ſake, or for being the occaſions of many mens ſinning againſt, and wounding of their own Conſciences: but that when they ſpeak of the Judgments of God, they ſpeak of them but as Scare-Crows, Bug-bears, or Pot-Guns.

For would it not be an uncharitable thing, or rather is it not an incredible thing, for any man to think that the Proteſtant Clergy ſhould do the very ſame things, which they expreſly declare and acknowledge to be heinous Offences, and Crimes againſt God, in their Adverſaries the Church of *Rome*, if they did really believe themſelves in what they uſually write, when they threaten them with the Judgments of God upon them for the ſaid things?

Is to avoid this, which they perhaps may look upon as ſome imputation, or reflection upon them: the ſaid Proteſtant Church (or rather the Ruling Clergy of it) ſhall deny the Caſe to be the ſame, and ſhall ſay that the Grounds or Principles upon which they perſecute men, are much different from thoſe of the Papiſts or Church of *Rome*.

Let them (I mean the Ruling Clergy) lay down the State of it, and ſhew us wherein the greatneſs of the ſaid difference doth conſiſt.

For if the Fact for which men are puniſhed by the ſaid Proteſtant Clergy be the very ſame, (or of the ſame nature) with that for which the Popiſh Clergy do puniſh men, *viz.* for their worſhipping God, and for their worſhipping of him not contrary to the Scripture, or contrary to any thing that ſeems clearly, and plainly their Duty in the Word of God, but contrary only to ſome Order or other in the Church. And if the quality of the Perſons that do ſuffer, and that are puniſhed by the Proteſtant Clergy, are the ſame alſo with thoſe that are puniſhed by the Popiſh Clergy, that is, ſuch men as are neither blameable in, Nor ſo much as accuſed or charged by them with or for any Crime, Or any Immorality in their Lives and Converſations: But ſuch as otherwiſe demean themſelves in all Duty, and with all Subjection to their Superiors.

I ſay if both theſe are the very SAME one with another, wherein doth the Eſſential Difference lye, between the Perſecution of the Popiſh Clergy, and the Perſecution of the Proteſtant Clergy, unleſs it be ſtrictly in this?

That the Proteſtant Clergy, do pretend to believe the Scriptures to be the Supreme Rule, and mind of God to his Church; and if asked do freely grant, That men are NOT bound in Conſcience to any Rule Superior to this, Nor can be bound in the things of Faith, or in things relating to the Worſhip of God to any Rule above this. And

And yet at the ſame time that they own this, they perſecute their Brethren, not only in their Liberties, but in their Goods, Fortunes, and Eſtates, and ſometimes in their Lives alſo (through naſty Priſons, and want of Conveniences) for acknowledging the ſaid Scriptures, to be ſuch as they themſelves do own them to be, and for that they accordingly conform to their own Principles. Whereas,

The Popiſh Clergy, though they perſecute men for the ſame Crimes, yet they do not give ſo much Honour to the Scriptures, nor do ſo much as pretend to it,

But which of theſe two,

Are for this very Cauſe the greater Crimes before God, may be left to all rational men to conſider.

In the mean time, I am moſt ſure of this, That whereas our firſt Reformers did call the Church of *Rome* Antichriſtian, and did charge her with Innocent Blood, and did put the name of Scarlet-Whore for this Reaſon upon her: Yet now it is moſt certain, the Stain and Diſcredit of it, is in her eyes manifeſtly leſſened, if it be not wholly blotted out.

For it is impoſſible that the Church of *Rome* ſhould ever hereafter grant, theſe things to be Stains or Crimes proper only to her, which ſhe doth not only ſee, but can daily obſerve ſome Proteſtant Church or other to follow her in, upon ſuch Grounds as are far leſs juſtifiable in the ſaid Proteſtant Church, according to the Principles they profeſs, than they are in her ſelf.

And that this is not a thing ever to be hoped or expected from her hereafter, is the more clear in regard the ſaid Church of *Rome* hath already, in ſo many words, ſharply, and cloſely Retorted it upon the Proteſtant Church: So that the VERY things which we blame the ſaid Church of *Rome* for, and for which we accuſe her Criminally, And which we pretend to be the main Grounds, why we could no longer have any Communion with her, which was her laying aſide the ſole Authority of the Scriptures, And her perſecuting ſuch as deſired to walk according to the Rule of it, ſome Proteſtant Churches have not only imitated her in, but have outgone her, and have done ſo much worſe than ſhe ever did, by how much we have contradicted the Principles we profeſs, which ſhe hath not.

And that ſhe hath caſt this, as a Reproach upon us in words, and hath alledged ſeveral Arguments to confirm it, and ſuch as have not to this very day been anſwered by us, *is matter of Fact.*

And if in all Courts of Judicature, *matter of Fact*, be good Evidence, and if the higheſt Evidence that can be given *in matter of Fact* is, when the Fact is able to ſpeak and atteſt it ſelf, or when it is capable to be atteſted to by thouſands, then is the Evidence which I here bring, every way as good, and every way as vallid, to prove what I affirm. Which is,

That the Church of *Rome* hath endeavoured to juſtifie and acquit her

ſelf, from the Crime of unjuſt Perſecution and Blood, by inſtancing the ſame thing in the Practice of Proteſtants one toward another: and therein hath exonerated her ſelf from the ſole Guilt of this evil, and from the ſole Guilt of her being alone that *Babylon* mentioned *Rev.* 17. which hath been frequently fixed ſingly upon her, and attributed to none beſides her.

And ſhe hath produced ſeveral Arguments alſo, and thoſe of Weight to make it appear, That Proteſtants In their Perſecution one of another, are far more unjuſt, upon the Principles we profeſs as Proteſtants, than ſhe is upon her own Principles, how much ſo ever we have pleaſed to inveigh againſt her, and revile her.

And theſe Arguments ſhe hath no way ſcrupled publickly and openly to divulge in Engliſh; to the end, that every man that is rational may the better examine them, and judge of them.

And that we have not as yet pleaded to the ſaid Arguments, Or to the Retortion ſhe hath made upon us: either by denying the Fact it ſelf abſolutely, or by diſtinguiſhing the reſpective differing Circumſtances and Grounds of it, is alſo well known. Whereby ſhe hath the more juſt occaſion to think, that thoſe Proteſtants that have thus perſecuted others, are conſcious to themſelves of their own Guilt.

And ſeeing all this is pure matter of Fact, one of theſe two Concluſions therefore do ſeem to be impoſſible to be avoided, *viz.*

That either we have done very evil in charging the Church of *Rome* as Antichriſtian, and in charging her as guilty of the Blood of the Saints, which is mentioned *Rev.* 17. 6. (which muſt nevertheleſs be inevitably charged ſome where) and very evil to impoſe the name of Scarlet-Whore and of *Babylon* upon her. Or, If the Proteſtant Churches have ſaid all this really in Judgment and really in Truth againſt her, Then have ſome Proteſtant Churches done much worſe themſelves, in being actually guilty of the ſame things, which have been ſo criminally charged upon her.

And if the Church of *Rome* be guilty of Innocent Blood, then none that is ſober can doubt, but ſhe muſt at length be lyable to the extreme Judgments of God for it.

And therefore if any Proteſtant Churches have followed her in that very Guilt, the ſame judgments muſt as unqueſtionably come upon them, and perhaps more ſevere.

And to the end that all Proteſtant Churches may be awakened, to conſider their great Danger in this Caſe, if they have been Perſecutors of their Brethren,

I need do no more, than to lay before them the expreſs Propheſie of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt in this Caſe, (*viz.*) That there ſhould be ſome who delaying in their hearts the Conſideration of his coming, ſhould inſtead of giving a portion of Meat to their fellow-Servants, be found ſmiting of them.

The Pertinancy, Weight and Importance of which Propheſie of Chriſt with reference

ference even to the Theme we have at preſent in hand, will appear very clear upon the Grounds or Arguments following, which are theſe.

1. That for the certainty of the ſaid Propheſie, *viz.* That there ſhould be ſome Perſons that would be forward to ſmite others, we have a double Teſtimony even by two of the Evangeliſts, as *Math.* 24. 48, 49, 50, 51. And *Luke* 12. 45, 46, 47.

2. That the Perſons who would be ſo forward to ſmite others, and of whom therefore the Lord Chriſt ſpeaks this, were to be of the Church, and were to be thoſe very Officers properly that were to be advanced in his Church above others, is not only plain by the Circumſtances of the words themſelves, but is yielded to by all Expoſitors, both Modern and Antient.

3. That the Lord Chriſt would not have mentioned ſuch a thing expreſly concerning his own Stewards, even concerning thoſe Officers which were to have the higheſt Rule and Truſt in his own Church, Nor would have left it upon ſo good a Record to us, if he had not in his Wiſdom ſurely foreſeen that this Caſe, (how notorious and ſtrange ſo ever it may appear) would certainly happen in his Church, there is not the leaſt Reaſon to doubt. And the leſs, ſeeing we have another Teſtimony left us to this purpoſe by St. *Paul* alſo, *Acts* 20. 28, 29, 30. with reference expreſly to the Officers of the Chriſtian Church. Nor is it any way diſagreeable to the Analogy of Faith, That if our Lord himſelf ſuffered properly from his Church, (and his own Prophets, alſo before him) and ſuffered from the very Rulers, Elders, and Overſeers of the ſaid Church: Then his Servants ſhould not think it a very ſtrange thing, (and much leſs an impoſſible) if they ſuffered alſo from his Church, and from Perſons of the very ſame Note, Name, Rank, Quality or Dignity in it, and eſpecially ſeeing Chriſt hath left a ſtanding Rule *John* 15. 20. *John* 13. 16. *Luke* 16. 40. *That the Servant is not greater than his Lord, and therefore is not to expect a Privilege above his Lord.*

4. That the Perſons who are to be ſmitten by the Stewards, Prefects, or Chief Officers of Chriſt's own Church, are σύνδουλοι even their very fellow-Servants and no other, *viz.* ſuch Perſons as own, and ſerve the ſame Maſter, or Lord, which the ſaid Stewards profeſs to ſerve: and ſuch as have received the ſame Teſtimony of his Word, or the ſame Rule of his Mind and Will to them, which the ſaid Stewards and Chief Officers have, is plain and unqueſtionable alſo, even from the words themſelves.

5. That the ſmiting which is here ſpoken of by the Lord Chriſt is, literally intended by him for actual Stripes, or for ſuch external Puniſhments, and Miſeries which were to be inflicted by the Chief Officers and Stewards of his Church, upon the Perſons of Men, is not queſtioned by any I know of, at leaſt the contrary hath never been maintained in any Age of the Church.

6. And it appears the rather, becauſe the ſmiting here mentioned, was to be of a Nature ſo very injurious, ſo oppreſſing and wrongful to them that were ſmitten; Yea ſo provoking to the juſt Mind, and Temper of the Lord Chriſt; That as an Argument how much he abhorred ſuch a ſmiting, and how much he was diſpleaſed at it, he threatens the ſaid Stewards and Chief Officers of his Church, *That he would cut them in ſunder for it, and would give them their Portion with the very Unbelievers, and Hypocrites.*

7. Which Severity, it were unreaſonable to believe, that he who was ſo meek a Maſter, would ever have threatned, and threatned eſpecially againſt the very Stewards, Rulers, and Officers of his own Houſe, or of his own Church, if he had not foreſeen, that the Cruelty which theſe very Stewards and Officers would uſe towards others in ſmiting of them, would be ſuch, and ſo very mercileſs, that the ſaid Stewards would be ſuch, as wouldde ſerve no Mercy, or Pity at all from him.

For if it be a Rule, *That they and they only, are to receive Judgment without Mercy, who themſelves have ſhewen or exerciſed no Mercy, James* 2. 13. Then it is impoſſible, that theſe Chief Officers and Stewards of Chriſt's Church, ſhould be puniſhed by him without Mercy, if they in ſmiting their fellow-Servants, had not utterly ſhut out all Bowels, and all mercy toward them.

8. And therefore the ſumm of the Lord Chriſt's Speech, and the end indeed of it appears both plainly, and briefly to be this, That as there would be among the very Stewards, and Chief Officers of his Church, ſome that would be forward to ſmite their own fellow-Servants, and to ſmite them ſo cruelly, and in ſuch a manner, as they would ſhew no kind of Compaſſion, Bowels, or Remorſe at the ſufferings of them, though this were but humane:

So the ſaid Stewards ſhould at length, moſt certainly meet with the like meaſure of Treatment at the hand of the Lord himſelf; and ſhould not fail to receive the execution of his wrath and judgments upon them for it.

And theſe things being thus eſtabliſhed I ſhall from the whole lay down only two Poſitions, which I humbly conceive none can diſpute with me (and much leſs go about to baffle) that will not make an open mock of the Lord Chriſt's own Sayings.

The firſt Propoſition is,

That it can no way be denyed, But among thoſe very Stewards, Rulers, or Chief Officers which were to be ſet over the Lord Chriſt's own Church, ſome would be found ſmiting of their fellow-Servants.

The Second Propoſition is,

That it cannot be denyed, but among the ſaid Stewards, Rulers, or Chief Officers of his Church, ſome ſhould and would be guilty of ſuch a manner of ſmiting, wronging, and ill treating of their fellow-Servants, as ſhould and would render them in the Lord Chriſt's Eſteem, no better than Hypocrites or Infidels.

And

And if neither of theſe can be any way queſtioned, by ſuch at leaſt, as queſtion not the Validity, and Divinity of the Lord Chriſt his own Sayings, Then for as much as the Ruling Clergy of our own Church, have ſometimes not only cruelly mulct ſome of their fellow-Servants in their Goods, but have cauſed them to be impriſoned, whereby ſome times (through the hard uſage they have met with in Priſons, and for want of thoſe Neceſſaries that might be convenient, they have loſt their Lives,) And conſequently the Ruling Clergy of our Church, have been guilty at leaſt, of being Smiters of their fellow-Servants, and even of ſuch of their fellow-Servants as profeſs not only the ſame Faith, but the very ſame Principles of Reformation that the ſaid Ruling Clergy do.

And ſeeing it is yet further matter of Fact, that notwithſtanding the ſaid Ruling Clergy have thus ſeverely puniſhed their fellow-Servants, yet they have not ſo much as charged or accuſed them of any Vice, Crime, or Immorality in their Lives, or Converſations, and much leſs have proved any ſuch thing againſt them; But have cauſed them to be beaten, and treated after this manner ſingly for this Reaſon and no other, *viz.* Becauſe in worſhipping the Lord Chriſt, They choſe rather ſtrictly to obſerve his Mind and Will, according to the beſt underſtanding they have of HIS Word, I ſay, rather than to obſerve any ſuch Orders or Rites as were not SO warranted, But were ſet down only by their fellow-Servants, that were Officers of the Church above them. Conſequently then, the Iſſue muſt needs be very ſhort, between the ſaid Ruling Clergy, and their fellow-Servants that have been thus ſmitten by them.

For either this ſmiting of them for this very cauſe here rehearſed, and for no other, *IS very wrongful in its ſelf*, as being againſt the very light of a mans Nature, and againſt that Supreme and Primitive Obligation which the Conſcience hath indiſpenſably unto God, above any that it can have unto man, OR *it is not at all wrongful.*

And either this kind of ſmiting which hath been uſed and urged and preſſed for by the Ruling Clergy of our own Church, IS *ſuch a ſmiting as appears to have been without all Pity or Remorſe* to ſuch as have been ſo ſmitten and beaten by the ſaid Clergy. *OR it hath not.*

But if the ſmiting we have here Inſtanced, and Inſtanced as *matter of Fact* be ſuch as hath been uſed by the Stewards and Rulers of Chriſts own Church, and uſed towards their fellow-Servants, *but hath been uſed wrongfully, And uſed without any manner of Remorſe to the ſufferings of the ſaid Perſons*, whatever their ſufferings be.

Then it muſt either be the very ſame kind of ſmiting, with that for which the Lord Chriſt in this ſpeech of his (that is thus Recorded by two ſeveral Evangeliſts) doth threaten the Rulers and Stewards of his Church, *that he will cut them aſunder and account them as Hypocrites.* OR it is not the ſame, NOR of the ſame kind.

But if it be not of the ſame kind, Then it concerns the Ruling Cler-

gy themſelves to clear themſelves, and to give an inſtance, what kind of ſmiting there is, or hath been uſed by the Ruling Officers of any Chriſtian Church, that is, or hath been more wrongful, and more injurious than this, and that is more remorſleſs and cruel than this, which the Lord Chriſt doth here condemn, and will certainly take vengeance for.

For ſome Caſe we muſt neceſſarily and unavoidably put, (unleſs we will deny or make a Mock of the Lords Chriſts own Words,) and ſuch a one, as we may give a ſufficient Inſtance of, even an Inſtance in a Chriſtian Church, between the Rulers and Officers of the ſaid Church, and others belonging to the ſame Church, wherein the wrong that is to be done by the ſaid Ruling Officers, in ſmiting others of the ſaid Church, is to be ſo extremely evil, and ſo perfectly injurious and cruel, as that the Authors of it, will neither merit any Mercy from the Lord, nor are according to his Word, to expect any Mercy from him.

From the Conſideration of the Premiſes, theſe following things are humbly preſented to the Conſideration of the preſent Ruling Clergy of our own Church; ſome of which (if not all) it is to be hoped, are men of tender Hearts, like the good King *Joſiah* that trembled at the Reading of the Word of the Lord in the Book of the Law, *viz.*

That for as much as we have ſtated or inſtanced ſuch a Caſe as is matter of Fact, and ſuch as cannot be denyed to be uſed, or practiſed by the Ruling Clergy of our own Church, towards others of the ſame Church and Profeſſion of Faith with themſelves. And in as much as we have ſtated it expreſly in order to the clearer evidencing of the Guilt of the ſaid Clergy, by reaſon of their ſaid ſmiting: and for Conviction conſequently of the Judgments that they are (without Repentance) inevitably lyable unto for it. We do therefore further ſay that,

If the ſaid Ruling Clergy ſhall in any reſpect diſallow the ſaid Inſtance, or ſhall think it meet to exonerate themſelves from the Guilt, that is by the ſaid Inſtance intended to be charged upon them. Then we ſay that,

They cannot avoid the inſtancing or ſtating of ſome other Caſe, relating to the Rulers or Stewards of the Chriſtian Church, and to their ſmiting of others in the ſaid Church, and to the evil of it, that muſt be more agreeable to what the Lord Chriſt here Condemns, than this Inſtance or Caſe is which we have here mentioned as matter of Fact.

Nor can they avoid the Inſtancing or ſtating of ſome other Caſe, that muſt merit conſequently more Puniſhment from God and that muſt be in its own Nature far worſe, and much more injurious cruel and remorſleſs than the Caſe which we have here inſtanced and ſtated is.

Nor can they avoid the inſtancing or ſtating ſome other Caſe, that muſt much more properly Relate to *Babylon*, and to that particular and expreſs Character, or broad Mark, that is ſet upon her, by the Angel or

Apoſtle

Apoſtle (*Revelat.* 17. 6.) than this particular Inſtance or Caſe doth, which hath been inſtanced relating to the Ruling Clergy of our own Church; which is here mentioned: Or elſe they muſt ſay that, that Viſion of the Apoſtle is not to be regarded by us.

Nor can they avoid the inſtancing or ſtating of ſome other Caſe, differing from what we have here mentioned, that muſt for the nature and kind of its ſmiting, be wholly agreeable to the Practiſe of the Church of *Rome*, and to the Ruling Clergy of it, and not at all agreeable to the Practice or Cuſtom of themſelves.

But if the Ruling Clergy of our Church cannot ſtate any ſuch Caſe, relating to the ſmiting of others of the ſame Church, and Faith with them, which ſhall manifeſtly differ in all theſe four Circumſtances, from the particular Inſtance or Caſe we have here mentioned, and which every man knoweth is *Matter of Fact*, then theſe two things will be impoſſible to be avoided by the Ruling Clergy of our Church; as

Firſt, that they will never be able to ſhew us wherein, the Grounds or Principles upon which they proceed to the Smiting, Puniſhing, or Perſecuting of their fellow-Servants, are not only different but far more juſtifiable than thoſe, upon which the Popiſh Clergy proceed in their Cruelty and Perſecution of the Proteſtants. And

Secondly, they will never be able to give us any clear Reaſon, and much leſs any Cogent and Invincible Arguments why we ſhould believe, That the Judgments of God will unqueſtionably reach the Church of *Rome* for her Cruelty, and Perſecution of the Proteſtants, but will not reach at all the Ruling Clergy of the Proteſtant Church, for their Smiting and Perſecution that they are guilty of againſt their Brethren of the ſame Faith and Reformation.

Which two things we may be aſſured, that all the tender-hearted of the Ruling Clergy of our Church, will lay to heart: There being ſome things, which that Holy Man of God even the Prophet *David* ſometime had done for which his Heart ſmote him. And ſome things he was about to do for the prevention of which he gave ſolemn thanks to God. For we find that *Davids* Heart ſmote him after he had numbered the people, and after he had but cut off the Skirt of *Sauls* Garment, 2 *Sam.* 24. 10. and 1 *Sam.* 24. 5. And he gives ſolemn Thanks for *Abigails* being an Inſtrument to prevent him from ſhedding Blood, 1 *Sam.* 25. 32.

For if the Church of *Rome* do puniſh others really, and indeed upon the Principle of Diſobeying her Authority, though ſhe dare not pretend this openly, leſt her Cruelty and Blood-Guiltineſs, *being for no other Cauſe*, ſhould be ſo manifeſt, that it would never be able to admit of a competent Apology, Colour, or Excuſe. *And therefore leaving this* ſhe inſiſts upon the Ground of Her Perſecution, as it is for Hereſie *only*.

But if we on the other hand, puniſh others not only with loſs of Goods, but with loſs of Liberty, Baniſhment, and perpetual Impriſonment,

which is far more Cruelty than Immediate Death it ſelf, (and would be more willingly choſen by moſt men) and do all this, for a Non-conformity, and Diſobedience to the Orders, and Rites of the Church, without ſo much as a pretence to any Guilt of Hereſie, Then

Where is the difference between theſe two ſorts of Perſecutors, unleſs the Ruling Clergy of our Church have done it more daringly, and more Broad-facedly than the Church of *Rome* doth ?

But, which is more to be conſidered and laid to heart.

If the Church of *Rome* do not puniſh thoſe that acknowledge her to be a True Church, but thoſe only that condemn her as a falſe Church, and who do under this Notion profeſſedly ſeparate from her as from that *Babylon* mentioned in the *Revelations*.

And if we on the other hand puniſh thoſe that own, not only the ſame Faith and Doctrine, But the very ſame Principles of Reformation with our ſelves, and who therefore give no juſt Provocation nor uſe any ſuch reproachful Language to our Church as the Proteſtant Churches generally do to the Church of *Rome*.

Where then is the difference, unleſs it be that ſhe renders evil to her profeſſed Enemies, who cannot but openly own a Hatred and Contempt for her, We inflict all manner of Evil upon our Brethren, that ſupplicate for Peace with us, and would be glad not to ſeparate from us ? and which of theſe two then is the more ingenious ?

But which is yet more, If we as we are Proteſtants, cannot but grant that there is to be a Subordination of the Church, not only immediately to the Lord Jeſus Chriſt himſelf, but to HIS Word, and that we utterly deny that he hath any ſuch *One*, as a *Vicar upon the Earth*, and utterly deny that any man whatever hath any power to diſpence with the Commands of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, ſo far as they appear to be clear to us from his Word, wherefore, if we notwithſtanding we make theſe things to be the very Profeſſion of our Faith, yet ſhall never puniſh any, But ſuch as keep exactly to all and every of theſe Principles, and ſhall obſerve them conſcientiouſly, and ſtrictly. Whereas the Popiſh Clergy on the contrary, puniſh none *but ſuch only* who deny or oppoſe wholly the things which their Church affirms.

Where then is the Reaſonableneſs of our Puniſhment, and the Unreaſonableneſs of theirs ? and which of theſe two hath the greater Reſemblance of Hypocriſie, even in our own Judgment ? whether our Puniſhment or theirs ? ſeeing we puniſh men for following the Principles we allow, They never puniſh any but for following thoſe Principles that they totally diſallow.

But the evil of this Perſecution further appears thus, for if we as Proteſtants ſay we have ſeparated from the Church of *Rome* out of Conſcience. Firſt, becauſe ſhe impoſed thoſe things that were Inſcriptural upon us. And ſecondly, becauſe ſhe was guilty of Blood, and that the

Characters

Characters of a falſe Church did for both theſe Reaſons lye upon her, and therefore that we cannot but give thanks ſolemnly unto God for our Deliverance out of her power.

And if the Ruling Clergy of a Proteſtant Church, have nevertheleſs not ſpared to perſecute unto Blood, even thoſe that have not only out of the ſame two Motives, ſeparated with us, But by perſiſting conſtantly in the ſaid Motives, do daily juſtifie us.

How comes our Blood and Perſecution to be leſs ſinful than hers? and why ſhould it be leſs crying unto God? for had we never ſo intently ſtudied, how we might have put the greateſt ſtumbling-Block we could before our Adverſaries, or how we might have brought the greateſt Blemiſh, Scandal and Reproach that was poſſible upon our Reformation: or how we might have opened the Complaints and Exclamations of men moſt againſt us; What Courſe could poſſibly have been taken, to all theſe ends, that could have been more effectual than this? For how can he that is thus perſecuted by the Ruling Clergy of a Proteſtant Church, give Thanks unto God ſolemnly, for his Deliverance out of the Church of *Rome's* Thraldom, when the very ſame Perſons, that pretend to be delivered with him, Impoſeth nevertheleſs the like Thraldom upon him? Or how ſhall he that is thus perſecuted, be any way able to imagine, and much leſs to believe, that the Church which perſecutes him, is ſerious in her Profeſſion of Thanks unto God for her own freedom, when ſhe is no ſooner freed her ſelf, but ſhe brings others into the ſame Hardſhip and Servitude, that ſhe her ſelf did but a little while ſince, greatly complain of and groan under? But leaving theſe things to be moſt ſeriouſly conſidered, by all Proteſtant Churches in theſe three Kingdoms, and elſewhere, even by all whomſoever they Concern; I ſhall now proceed to give in this place,

A Deſcription of the Abſurd, Ridiculous and Contemptible Grounds and Foundations on which the Papiſts Build.

Though nothing is more Evident than this, that the Thraldom or Bondage of the Church of *Rome*, doth principally conſiſt in the diſagreeableneſs of her Doctrines, to the Rule of the Scripture, yet nevertheleſs it is *Matter of Fact*, That the Church of *Rome* doth not in plain, and expreſs Terms deny the Truth, or deny the Authority of the Scripture, or deny the end of them as they are appointed for the Church. And if we cannot for this Cauſe juſtly charge her with any of theſe things; Then we muſt neceſſarily grant, that the ſaid Doctrines ſo far as they are corrupt, and have a real Inconſiſtency with the Scripture it ſelf, could have their Riſe at firſt no otherwiſe,

Than by vertue of her Authority as a Church. And conſequently, that as they had thus their Riſe at firſt, ſo they have had their whole Maintenance and Support, ever ſince, no otherwiſe than *as this Authority being*

Abſolute and Arbitrary hath defended them againſt whatever might be ſaid from the Authority of the Scripture, in oppoſition to them.

And therefore here we ſhall lay open her Shame and Nakedneſs, and her great Abſurdity, that lyeth in the Manner and Method, and Nature of her Policy. For the Acquiring of that Arbitrary, Abſolute and unlimited Power which ſhe exerciſeth.

And firſt, we find that ſhe doth upon her own Authority affirm, *That it is neither the Letter of the Scripture, nor the Grammar of it, how Plain, Clear, or Expreſs ſoever it be, that doth or ought to bind the Conſciences of men, but the ſence of the ſaid* Scripture only. And

Secondly, ſhe doth affirm, *That it is not the ſence of the Scripture alſo, which doth or can any way directly bind the Conſciences of men, if this ſence be conſidered nakedly in it ſelf, (either as literal, or myſtical) but that the ſaid ſence is capable of binding only conſidered as it is Catholick.* And

Thirdly, *That it is not either in the Letter or in the Grammar of the ſaid Scripture, how clear or plain ſoever it be, that the Divine Authority of it is placed, but ſimply and only in the ſence of it as this ſence is the ſence of the Univerſal Church, and therefore that ſence which is properly called Catholick.*

Which Propoſitions, ſhe having in her Prudence thus peculiarly laid down, as the Grounds or Foundations not only of all Chriſtian Faith, but of all Chriſtian Verity and Truth it ſelf.

In the next place ſhe builds upon theſe unſound Grounds, an Aſſumption that is parallel to them, and that is every way as entirely her own as the former, *viz. That ſhe alone hath not only the Right* (as excluſive to all others) *of Diſpencing this Catholick Sence to all the Members of the Chriſtian Church, but of diſpencing it in order to their Salvation*, and hath inherent in her, the full and abſolute Power finally, and Inappealeably, to determine at all times, and upon all Occaſions, what the ſaid Catholick Sence is concerning all Points whatever that may be controverted, and concerning all places of Scripture whatever that may be doubted of, or diſputed.

And that as this Power is abſolutely neceſſary for the Preſervation of the Unity, ſo for the Preſervation of the Purity of the ſaid Chriſtian Faith: in regard it is impoſſible, that ſuch a Sence of the Scripture as is wholly Univerſal and Catholick ſhould at any time Err.

The Concluſion then (if all theſe Premiſes be true) is, *That the Church of* Rome *is to be believed, and that all her Determinations whatever they be are for Conſcience ſake to be Obeyed, and Submitted unto, even by the whole Chriſtian Church, without any Diſpute or without ſo much as any ſcruple of Mind.*

This Concluſion, being that which all the Partizans and Champions of the Church of *Rome*, do labour with Might and Main to bring every man to, and therefore it is the ſame with that Security and Reſt, which they pretend all men may have, not only with abſolute Safety, but with abſolute ſatisfaction, in the Boſom of their Church.

But

But indeed this Concluſion hath not any tendency to Salvation at all, but is quite contrary to all that is alledged, and leads expreſly to nothing elſe but to the utter Overthrow, and Subverſion of the whole Scripture it ſelf, with the Mind, Law, Will, and Counſel of God, ſo far at leaſt as depends upon Revelation; in regard it puts the Scripture, together with the whole Authority of it, (though Divine in it ſelf) abſolutely, perfectly, and entirely into the Arbitrary Will and Power of the ſaid Church.

And therefore the Proteſtants upon Conſideration of the extreme Miſchiefs, that muſt of neceſſity follow from ſuch a Concluſion as this, they do with Indignation reject it. And

Firſt, The Proteſtants do wholly deny, that the ſaid Church of *Rome* hath any rightful Authority to make null the Grammar of the Scripture.

Secondly, The Proteſtants do much more deny, that ſhe hath any Right to inſtitute or ſet up ſuch a Sence of the Scripture, (under any name or pretence whatever) that is either oppoſite to the Grammar of the Scripture, or that at leaſt pretends that there is not a neceſſity to follow and obſerve the Rules of it.

Thirdly, Conſequently they utterly deny, that ſhe hath any Right to transfer the Authority of the Scripture, from the Sence proper to the Letter of it ſelf, to ſuch a Sence as is only and properly hers. And

Fourthly, They deny, that ſhe hath any Right or any Power to ſet up any Sence of her own at all, which is not abſolutely ſubjected to the Rule and Authority that is inherent to the Scriptures, Letter, and Word, with the proper Sence of it, as this is and ought to be Supreme to all others.

Fifthly, And they do much leſs acknowledge, that ſhe hath any ſuch Right in her, or derived to her therefore, as to make her Sence of the Scripture (or what ſhe declares to be ſo,) the Sence of the Univerſal Church.

Sixthly, Or that ſhe hath any Right to make her ſence of the Scripture, to be the Abſolute or Supreme Rule of all Infallible and Chriſtian Truth, or to diſallow any Appeal from her proper Determinations, to the living Rule of the Scriptures Grammar, and to the Letter or Word of it.

Seventhly, And the Proteſtants denying all theſe things, they do deny therefore that ſhe hath any Authority, Power, or Right to diſpence with, That Duty and Obligation which is divinely and abſolutely laid upon the Conſciences of men, which is, To obey the Word of God in the litteral, plain, and expreſs Sence of it.

Eighthly, And the Proteſtants do deny conſequently, that the Conſciences of men are, or can any way poſſibly be obliged to her bare Determination of the Sence of the Scripture. Eſpecially ſo far as this is ſet

up abſolutely by her, and is not dependant upon any Sence proper to the Words, and Grammar of the Scripture it ſelf.

All and every of which Powers,as the Proteſtant Church doth wholly deny to the Church of *Rome*; So for as much as the Church of *Rome*,can pretend to no one of the ſaid Rights, or Authorities now mentioned, otherwiſe than as it muſt by ſome means or other, be lawfully conveyed or derived to her.

The Proteſtant Church therefore challengeth her and provoketh her, to ſhew that ſpecial and peculiar Commiſſion, by which SHE and SHE alone is impowered to do all or any of thoſe things before named.

Becauſe,without this Commiſſion can be produced, and produced upon ſome Clear,Evident and SufficientWarrant or Ground,for it: All Her pretences to the ſaid Authority, (ſeeing it is ſo manifeſtly deſtructive to the Scripture it ſelf,) muſt needs appear to be, not only Precarious, but very frivolous and very abſurd.

The Church of *Rome* being thus challenged and provoked in the point of her Commiſſion, and yet well knowing that there is nothing which ſhe can poſſibly appeal unto for the proof of her Authority, beſide the Scripture it ſelf.

She becomes hereupon, to be ſeveral ways diſtreſſed and perplexed.

Firſt, becauſe ſhe finds that ſhe cannot allow of the Grammatical Sence of the Scripture, in any one Caſe whatever, But ſhe muſt neceſſarily, and unavoidably allow it in all other Caſes alſo, where it may equally and with as good warrant be alledged.

Secondly, ſhe diſcerns, that if ſhe ſhould allow the Grammar of the Scripture to be Authoritative at all, ſhe ſhould never be able to prevent the pretences that others would have, (even among the Laity it ſelf) to be as competent Judges of the ſaid Grammar as her ſelf.

Thirdly, beſides theſe two extreme Inconveniences (which by her are not to be endured) ſhe evidently alſo ſeeth that the Words of Scripture themſelves, will not of themſelves, by any literal Conſtruction or Expoſition of them, be ſufficient to prove any ſuch Authority as ſhe claims, and that ſhould the words of the Scripture be urged therefore,no further than according to the expreſs Tenor of them,or according to the ſence that the Grammar it ſelf would bear of them, ſhe ſhould be ſo far from gaining the Power and Commiſſion which ſhe pretends to have a Warrant for, that inſtead of it, ſhe ſhould expoſe her Authority to a manifeſt hazard, even not only to be ſifted, ventilated, and diſcuſſed by others; but as freely cenſured by ſuch as ſhould obſerve the nature of her Inferences, and how weakly and infirmly they are deduced, with reſpect to the genuine Force or Conſtruction of the words themſelves.

And therefore as for all theſe Reaſons, ſhe apparently diſcerns that the Grammar of the Scripture is an Adverſary abſolutely to her, ſo ſhe doth

as

as ſmartly and dexterouſly perceive, that the Scripture it ſelf, were the Authority of it allowed to be in the Grammar, would be as great an Enemy every way to her, as even the literal and Grammatical Sence of it is.

For in as much as theſe three things are at once both equally and neceſſarily Incumbent upon her, and ſuch as cannot any of them poſſibly be diſpenſed with by her, *viz.*

Firſt, to prove the peculiarity of her Authority above any other Church beſide her whatever, And

Secondly, to juſtifie the Incorruption of her Doctrine, And

Thirdly, to preſerve the pretence that ſhe hath by this conſequently to Infallibility.

And ſeeing theſe three do ſo much concern her, that it is a thing very plain, and very eaſie to perceive, that unleſs they can all be maintained, upheld, and defended in ſome meaſure rationally by her, ſhe can no way keep up her temporal Power, nor any way avoid a lyableneſs to a Reformation.

Wherefore having upon a due and ſerious ſurvey of the Letter and Grammar of the Holy Scripture, ſufficiently found, and clearly obſerved, that the Scripture as thus ſtrictly conſidered, in the Order, Diſpoſition, and Conſtruction of its Letter, will never be ſerviceable to her in any one of theſe three Reſpects: but will on the contrary, expreſly oppoſe her.

As ſhe is hereby expreſly convinced then, that there can be no cauſe why ſhe ſhould magnifie the expreſs word of it; and much leſs any cauſe why ſhe ſhould truſt in it, or appeal to it, ſo leſt that others ſhould be carried away with a rational Opinion of it, and ſhould for this cauſe be induced to urge, and preſs ſeveral things againſt her from it: *She ſaw it but neceſſary that ſhe ſhould come to a deliberate Reſolution with her ſelf, To weaken the Credit of the Scripture wholly, and not only to deny all Authority, and even all Divinity it ſelf to be in the Word, Letter, and Grammar of the Scripture, (ſtrictly conſidered by it ſelf) but to deny alſo that any Sence is capable to be certainly had from it, or any truth that is infallible, which how bold a thing ſoever it might ſeem to be, yet ſhe ſaw it no way avoidable by her, becauſe ſhe had no way beſides this, to ſecure her ſelf againſt all that Inconveniency, that ſhe knew the Scripture would and muſt otherwiſe caſt upon her neceſſarily, by vertue of the expreſſneſs and Authority of its Letter.*

Having then taken up this Reſolution in the firſt place, conſidering nevertheleſs maturely with her ſelf, that if ſhe ſhould caſt off all her Relation to the Scripture wholly, and entirely, ſhe could not maintain the very Authority of the Church it ſelf; and much leſs ſhould be able to defend either the Divinity, or the Infallibility of thoſe things that are ſought by her: She therefore cometh to a ſecond Reſolution, which ſhe judgeth no leſs neceſſary and expedient for her than the former, *viz.* To

maintain the Divinity, and ſet up the Authority abſolutely of the Scripture, though not in the expreſs Letter of it, nor in the Sence proper to it, yet (as we have ſaid already) in another Sence that ſhe ſets up inſtead of it ; That is, according to ſuch a Sence which ſhe judges convenient that ſhe her ſelf ſhould (as a Church) put upon it, and put upon it in ſuch manner alſo, and with ſuch a Conſtruction and Expoſition, as might be moſt ſutable to her own end ; and moſt anſwerable to her own particular Intereſt : which Sence ſhe therefore ſtiles by the ſpecious Name or Appellation of the Catholick Sence, or of the Sence of the Univerſal Church, in diſtinction at leaſt from (and for the better avoiding of) that Sence which is truly literal, and is properly Conſtructive and Grammatical.

And as it is this Sence alone therefore as Catholick, that ſhe confines both the Authority and Divinity of the Scripture to, and that alſo entirely : So ſhe doth this in her own more than ordinary Judgment and Prudence. In regard ſhe is ſure that this Sence will never fail her, but will always be ready to abett whatever ſhall upon any occaſion be determined by her : Becauſe this Sence requires no deeper Reaſon, nor any firmer Bottom or Ground at any time for it; Than what reſolves it ſelf at length into the meer arbitrary Will and Pleaſure of her ſelf. And ſo ſhe can never be accountable further for it, than barely to declare it or affirm it to be *the Catholick Sence* ; becauſe ſhe ſaith it is the Sence of the Univerſal Church.

And is not this rare Policy ?

And therefore to juſtifie this medly Sence, which (if what ſhe ſaith be true) is both the Sence of the Scripture, and is not. And which muſt neceſſarily be the Sence of the Scripture becauſe the Church will ſo have it ; and not becauſe it is a Sence really, properly, or radically inherent in it. To juſtifie alſo her Rightful throwing off the Authority of the Grammar it ſelf, and to juſtifie her transferring the whole Divinity of the Scripture, from the natural Order and Conſtruction of its Words, to a Sence altogether forreign to its Letter, and to the expreſſneſs of it.

> I ſay to juſtifie ALL THIS ſhe pleads her own Authority, not only as Divine, but as abſolute, and infallible : and conſequently as that which ought to be ſubmitted unto by every one, and that readily as to the very Ordinance, and Appointment of God himſelf.

Which being the very Queſtion it ſelf that was in diſpute, and that very thing therefore that was firſt of all neceſſary to be proved by her, ſhe is conſtrained by this means whether ſhe will or no, *to run round in a Circle, viz.*

To prove her proper Authority by the Catholick Sence of the Scripture, And

To prove the Catholick Sence of the Scripture by vertue of her proper Authority.

And at length not only without all ground, but without all ſhame or ſence of Juſtice, to beg the whole Argument it ſelf in Controverſie between us: Than which we ſay, there can be nothing whatever, that is either more unreaſonable, or more impudent and baſe.

And having gotten her Authority therefore in this manner, not only, or not ſo much by ſhuffling, as by plain ſnatching it; and being conſcious to her ſelf that it would be a very vain thing for her, to ſuppoſe ſhe ſhould be able to defend the ſaid Authority, by any better Argument than that very Stratagem ſhe made uſe of it to prove it: ſhe concludes it to be moſt ſafe to maintain it therefore, in the ſame manner as ſhe got it: which is by force, and therefore reſolves to puniſh all men with Death, that will be ſo hardy as to deny it; ſo far at leaſt as her Power or Mediation can any way extend to do it.

And yet leſt the Quarrel ſhould by this means look as if it were too perſonal, and too private, and that ſuch Princes as were leſs concerned at it, ſhould not be much diſpoſed to ingage with her in it: She, as if ſhe were Pious in the very Execution of her Malice, pretends this ſhedding the Blood of men (though it may ſeem indeed to be very ſevere yet) is abſolutely neceſſary: not ſo much becauſe they diſobey her as becauſe they diſobey and oppoſe the Catholick Sence of the Holy Scripture, In which Catholick Sence all the Authority, and Divinity of it, (if you will believe her) is properly placed, and that by oppoſing of this they oppoſe by Conſequence, not only the Catholick Faith of the Church, but the conſent of all Chriſtianity it ſelf, In the unqueſtionableneſs of which, the Security and Salvation of men can only and alone reſt: which pretext is another part as well of her Abſurdity as of her Violence and Fraud.

That notwithſtanding ſhe neither hath nor can prove any Obligation that men in Conſcience can have to her Authority, or to rely upon the Determination of it. And though ſhe cannot otherwiſe require the belief of it from any, but as it is a thing meerly precarious, yet ſhe puts all to death that yield not to this abſolute Uſurpation of her Power.

The Uſe of this laſt preceding Diſcourſe.

From this brief Scheme or ſummary Proſpect of the Nature of this new and peculiar Policy of the Church of *Rome*, We may eaſily make a meaſure of her Wiſdom, as well as of her Truth; for by this ſhort State or Account that we now have of theſe Motives which did mainly induce the ſaid Church, intirely to lay aſide the expreſs Letter and Grammar of the Scriptures, (at leaſt as to the Certainty, Truth, or Infallibility of it) we may eaſily have a view of ſeveral horrible Abſurdities, Contradictions, and indeed Impieties, that ſhe is by this means forced, and neceſſitated to fall into, of which we ſhall now mention a few Particulars.

For firſt as it is *Matter of Fact* (which is the moſt infallible Evidence in the World) that all the Doctrines of the Church of *Rome*, do depend ſolely upon *The Authority of the ſaid Church* : So it is *Matter of Fact* equally, *That both the ſaid Doctrines and the ſaid Authority it ſelf*, (which upholds the ſaid Doctrines,) do depend upon the Catholick Sence of the Scripture. For the ſame Reaſon therefore, it is even from the ſtrictneſs of the Connexion and mutual Dependance of theſe three one upon another, That as the Doctrines of the Church of *Rome*, muſt neceſſarily be all of them True, and all of them Divine, If the Authority of the ſaid Church is altogether True, and altogether Divine : So alſo the Authority of the Church of *Rome*, muſt be unqueſtionably Divine, If the Catholick Sence of the Scripture upon which it is alone built, be abſolutely Divine and free from all poſſibility of Error.

And conſequently then, as the ſureſt proof that we can poſſibly have of the Divinity of all the Doctrines of the ſaid Church, doth lye in the proof the divine Authority of the ſaid Church, and in the ſureneſs of it : So the ſureſt proof of this doth lye in the proof of the Catholick Sence of the Scripture, *viz.* in the Proof, that this Catholick Sence is both divine and infallible, and free from all manner of Error imaginable.

For it is this Sence alone that gives being to the ſaid Authority.

In as much then, as it is ſtrongly alledged that the Catholick Sence cannot poſſibly but be Divine, Infallible, and free from all manner of Error : The Authority of the ſaid Church therefore muſt neceſſarily be Divine, Infallible, and free from all manner of Error, and therefore it is impoſſible, but the Doctrines which are taught by the ſaid Church, muſt be ſuch alſo : that is, They muſt be Divine, Infallible, and free from all Error.

So then, theſe three are and muſt be all of them Divine alike, *viz.*,

The Doctrines of the Church of *Rome*, and the Authority of the ſaid Church, and The Catholick Sence of the Scripture.

And conſequently, the Sence of the Univerſal Church muſt be as Divine as any of theſe three, Becauſe the Catholick Sence of the Scripture, and the Sence of the Univerſal Church is but one and the ſame, (*Et quæ in eodem Tertio conveniunt inter ſe conveniunt*) wherefore ſeeing of all theſe, The Catholick Sence of the Scripture is----*The main and ſure Baſis of all the reſt*-----and that upon the Divinity, certainty, and infallibility of This, ALL the Divinity, Authority, and Infallibility of the Church of *Rome*, with its whole Doctrine doth, and muſt wholly and intirely depend. The abſolute and unqueſtionable Certainty or Divinity of this therefore, is firſt to be cleared : ſeeing this (as we ſaid) is of all others the moſt ſtrongly alledged.

To one that is an apt Schollar to underſtand, and receive whatſoever the Church of *Rome* teacheth, we ſhall here ſhew how this is, by her cleared.

To

To evidence then the truth of the Catholick Sence of the Scripture, how Infallible and Unqueſtionable it is, and to manifeſt not only the neceſſity, but the abſoluteneſs of its Divinity, We need not much more than one Reaſon, becauſe this doth of it ſelf upon the matter, amount to a Demonſtration; (which is,) That there is nothing more clear or more certain, than that the ſaid Catholick Sence neither really is, the Sence of the Scripture, nor really is not: nor any thing more certain, than that the ſaid Catholick Sence is Both: That is to ſay, both it is, and it is not the Sence of the Scripture. And that we may be yet the more fully and diſtinctly inſtructed in the nature of this Miſtery, and of the ſtrangeneſs of it, we are to know, That the extraordinary wonderful, and peculiar Power of this Catholick Sence, lyeth, in the ſingular Relation which it hath to the Univerſal Church, and to the Scripture as it is the Sence of neither of them properly and entirely; and yet is the Sence of both of them at one and the ſame time.

For though this Catholick Sence cannot be had without the Scripture, and though it is, and muſt neceſſarily be given therefore to the ſaid Church by the Scripture. Becauſe it is the Scripture only that the ſaid Church doth always refer to, when it doth at any time cite, or alledge the ſaid Sence as it is Divine. And conſequently though without the ſaid Scripture, it had been wholly impoſſible that the ſaid Church ſhould either have Challenged or laid Claim to any Truth that had been Authoritative or Divine. Notwithſtanding this, The ſaid Catholick Sence both is given, and muſt neceſſarily be given to the Scripture by the ſaid Church; becauſe without the ſaid Church, it would be impoſſible that this Sence ſhould ever be found out in the Scripture it ſelf, in regard nothing is more certain, than that the Scripture hath of it ſelf properly no Sence at all (at leaſt none that is True, Certain and Infallible, but as this is by the Univerſal Church, and by the Prudent Care and Foreſight of it beſtowed upon it. And ſo we muſt unavoidably grant, that though the Catholick Sence be but *One*, yet this *One* Sence is both created by the Church for the Scripture, and created by the Scripture for the Church, (*Which is a very rare and unuſual ſort of Production.*

And therefore it will follow alſo: that if we regard the Truth, Certainty and Infallibility of this Catholick Sence, it is wholly and entirely from the Church, becauſe neither the Authority properly of it, nor its Divinity, doth conſiſt in its Truth, or in its Certainty, If we regard the Divinity and Authority of this Catholick Sence, it is not only originally, but entirely from the Scripture: becauſe it may be Divine, though it have neither Certainty nor Infallibility in it, (at leaſt) as the Church of *Rome* tells us. And conſequently, the ſaid Catholick Sence conſidered as it is ſtrictly in the Scriptures, hath indeed both Authority abſolutely in it, and Divinity: but it neither hath Truth, Certainty, nor Infallibility. But conſidered as it is ſtrictly in the Church,

it hath both Truth, Certainty, and Infallibility abſolutely in it. But it hath not for all this any thing of Divinity, or Authority; for this it muſt borrow from the name of the Scripture.

So that it is plain, That the ſaid Catholick Sence is neither the Sence of the Church properly and entirely, nor the Sence of the Scripture properly and entirely, and yet that it is the Sence of both of them entirely. And the Reaſon for this is alſo plain, *viz.* Becauſe according to the Doctrine of the Church of *Rome*, the Divinity of the Catholick Sence *is one thing*: its Truth, and Infallibility *is quite another*: for though the Church can give to the Catholick Sence its Truth and Infallibility entirely, yet ſhe cannot give any part of its Divinity.

And though the Scripture, can give to the Catholick Sence its whole Divinity; and conſequently its Authority entirely yet it cannot of it ſelf give it any thing of truth, or any thing of Infallibility, but this it muſt have from the Church.

So myſtically is this Catholick Sence parted and divided between both. By which partition of the Catholick Sence (which is ſtrange) we come to know another thing alſo (which is as ſtrange) and which otherwiſe we ſhould never have been able to have found out, *viz.* *That though the end of giving the Scripture was unqueſtionably for the enlightening Ruling and Governing the Church, yet the end of ſetting up the Church was equally alſo for the enlightening Ruling and Governing of the Scriptures.*

Which as it is a Conſequence that can no way be avoided by the Rules of the Church of *Rome*, ſo it is as manifeſtly abſurd as all the reſt. Secondly, The Divinity of the Catholick ſence with the neceſſity abſolutely of it, will appear alſo yet the more clearly if we ſhall conſider, that unleſs we do admit the Church in the firſt place to be holy, infallible, and free from all manner of Error imaginable, it will and muſt be impoſſible that the Catholick ſence of the Scripture ſhould be abſolutely True, Holy, Infallible and free from all Error. Becauſe the ſence of the Scripture becomes thus Catholick, Holy, Infallible and True, only as it is the ſence of the Catholick Church firſt, and as it is by this means derived to the Scripture it ſelf. And for any to ſeek a ſence in the Scripture therefore that is Holy, True, Infallible and free from all Error alone by the Scripture it ſelf, without the Direction and Aſſiſtance of the ſaid Catholick or Univerſal Church is manifeſtly abſurd. Both becauſe the Scripture hath properly of it ſelf no ſence at all that is certain: and becauſe it is the immediate Authority of the Church only, upon which the ſence of the Scripture ſo far as it is properly Catholick, Infallible, and abſolutely True is wholly and entirely built.

And yet on the contrary, in regard it muſt be confeſſed that the Church could not poſſibly have ſo much as either Name or Being, were it not for the Scripture it ſelf, and much leſs that it could have thoſe Privileges, or that Authority placed in it which it challengeth above all others for being

being Holy, True, Infallible and free from all manner of Error. Unleſs we admit therefore the Scripture in the firſt place to be originally True, Holy and Divine,and therefore to contain all Authority and Truth prmitively in it ſelf, that is Holy, Abſolute and Divine : and that by reaſon of this its primitive Sanctity, Divinity and Truth ; it hath a power ſimply and properly of its ſelf to confer a Divine Right, Authority, and Infallibility to the Church, it will and muſt be impoſſible that the ſaid Church, ſhould be any way impowered or enabled either to teach ſuch Doctrines as are Certain, True, Holy and Divine, and without any fallibility whatever ; or that it ſhould be able to declare, what that ſence of the Scripture is, which is abſolutely Holy, True, Infallible and free from all manner of Error. Becauſe if the whole being of the Church is entirely from the Scripture, then not only all the Holineſs, Truth, and Infallibility of the ſaid Church,with the truth of whatever it teacheth, but all the Authority alſo,which it hath or challengeth by reaſon of any of theſe extraordinary Properties, is, and muſt unavoidably be built upon the Scripture alſo, and upon the primitive Truth, Authority and Sanctity of it.

Both which things now being admitted,it muſt neceſſarily follow,that if we will fully comprehend the Divinity of the Catholick ſence, and come to be convinced of the neceſſity and abſoluteneſs of its Infallibility,Authority and Truth ; we muſt grant,that the Truth, Holineſs, Infallibleneſs and Authority of the Church,was and could not but be before the Truth, Holineſs,and Infallibility,of the Scripture ſence.And muſt alſo grant that the Truth,Sanctity and Authority of the holy Scripture,was and could not but neceſſarily be before any Truth,Holineſs,Infallibility and Authority was or could poſſibly be in the Church :and conſequently we muſt grant that theſe were both firſt, and ſo both of them were one before another reſpectively.

In like manner we muſt grant that as there is an abſolute neceſſity that the Church, and its Authority as infallible ſhould be built upon the Scripture entirely, and upon the Original Authority of it, ſo there is as great a neceſſity that the Sence of the Scripture with the truth of it (wherein its Authority doth properly and principally conſiſt,) ſhould be built upon the Church, and upon the Authority of it , and therefore a neceſſity, that both theſe ſhould be built each upon the other mutually and reſpectively, and therefore a neceſſity that the Church ſhould be the Foundation of all the Scriptures truth, and that the Scripture ſhould be the Foundation of all the Church its Truth, and therefore that each of theſe, ſhould be the reſpective Baſis or Ground of the other of theſe mutually.

The Clearneſs, Conſonancy, Coherence and manifeſt Conſiſtency, of all which things, whoever doth not underſtand, and doth not alſo fully and unqueſtionably believe, is neither a Schollar that is quick enough, nor a ſchollar that is qualified enough for the ſufficient and ſubſtantial comprehending, of the Divinity of the Catholick ſence.

And therefore upon the conſideration of the whole we may conclude

 that

that if all theſe things now mentioned are ſubſtantially true, and capable to be clearly underſtood by rational Perſons, and that they are conſiſtent really one with another: Then it muſt be certain, that the Church of *Rome* is both a true Church, and its Doctrines are all certainly and unqueſtionably true, and all its followers muſt be true Chriſtians alſo, and free from all Error, for theſe things muſt be all of them true and certain alike.

But if theſe ſeveral things above mentioned are manifeſtly contradictory and abſurd, and ſuch therefore as are no way poſſible to be rationally underſtood, or capable to be conſiſtent any way one with another: then theſe things can never be true, *viz.* Either that the Church of *Rome* ſhould be a true Church, or that its Doctrines ſhould be all of them true, or that its followers ſhould be ſuch true Chriſtians as to be free from all Error. Seeing none of theſe three things can be otherwiſe true, or certain, than as the ſeveral things above mentioned are true or certain, which are manifeſtly abſurd and utterly falſe.

The horrible Wickedneſs of the Church of Rome *further manifeſted.*

The Impiety and Wickedneſs, as well as Abſurdity of the Church of *Rome* in this invention of the Catholick Sence, and in her ſetting up of it, will be evident alſo to any that will conſider, that even while ſhe goeth about, not only to corrupt but to defeat the Scripture of its proper Authority (as a Divine Writing) by her denying that any Sence is capable to be had from it, but what the Church only doth give it, and by denying therefore that the Litteral or Grammatical Sence or Conſtruction of the Scripture is in any place certain, or at leaſt not ſo certain, as it may be ſaid of its ſelf to be ſimply, abſolutely or infallibly true, or ſo certain that it is in any place ſufficient to give an infallibility of truth to us, ſhe doth no other than diſcover by all this what her drift is throughout all this Device.

For ſhe would never run her ſelf upon ſo many Rocks, to maintain things ſo manifeſtly groſs, and abſurd as this Invention puts her upon, were it not that her aim by all this is-----*To ſpoyl and deprive the Scripture utterly not only of all power and Authority, but of all Right immediately and abſolutely of its ſelf, to bind and oblige the Conſciences of men to it, even though the ſence of it ſhould, from the plain and genuine Conſtruction of its words appear never ſo ſtrong, clear or coherent to them*-----which Scope or Deſign of the Church of *Rome*, for withdrawing our Obedience and Subjection wholly from the Scripture it ſelf, even in things that are plain, and can be no way doubted by us as we are rational Perſons, and underſtand well enough what the Nature and Import of Sence is. I ſay this ſcope or deſign of withdrawing our Obedience from the Scripture it ſelf, and from the plain and genuine ſence of it, is no othet than openly to withdraw us from the plain and expreſs Mind of God, (the Scripture being his Word) which is not only to offer an Injury to the Authority and Councel of God, but to his very Grace alſo, in giving his Word to us. And yet that this is the Chief and Principal

cipal Aim of the Church of *Rome* in her contending for the Catholick Sence, and in her disallowing all other Sence whatever to the Scripture, is the more clear because it is matter of Fact, that whersoever she can or doth exercise any Dominion either by her self, or by her delegates, there she will suffer none, even not of her own Clergy, to depend upon the Scripture strictly. But will have all men at all times, to submit all their Judgments, and all their Consciences absolutely to her particular Determinations, in all things relating to Faith, whether the things she doth determine be agreeable or not agreeable to the Word, or Rule of Faith it self. And if all her own Natives are treated with this Severity, and Arbitrarines by her, is is easie then to imagine what Strangers may expect from her, especially if we consider that for the more effectual preventing the Laity also, to shew any manner of Duty immediately to the Scripture, and lest they should be convinced even by the very sight of it, or should hold themselves obliged to the things plainly and expresly commanded by it, she doth throughout all places, where she hath any Power utterly forbid all use of the Scripture to them, and will not suffer the Scripture so much as to be read, or heard by them in a Vulgar or known Tongue.

By which Instances it may sufficiently appear, (seeing these things are matters of Fact) that the Indeavour used by the Church of *Rome* to lessen the Credit of the Scriptures Letter, Grammar or Word, as if there were no certainty of sence in it, is not really grounded upon any thing which may justly be attributed to the Scripture it self: * But is a thing absolutely plotted, Contrived, formed or purposely Designed by the said Church for no other end, but that men might not rely upon the Scripture, or trust to the truth of those things that may be plainly and expresly founded in the very Letter of it; and so might be moved to give Obedience to the Authority of it, and to be led by it, NOR for any other end, but that Men might not be able to plead the said Word, with the expressnes of it against her, or have a just ground to examine her Doctrines or Authority by it; and to withdraw from her or to assert there is a necessity that divers things should be reformed in her.

And for this Reason it is therefore, that she neither hath any Subjects, nor can, or will admit of any to be her Subjects, whether of the Laity or Clergy, who will not withdraw their Obedience immediately from the Letter of the said word, and from the Authority of it, and give it to her as a Church.

> Which injury against the Authority of the Scripture, or written Letter of the word of it, as it is therefore knowingly, wittingly and willingly committed by the Church of *Rome*, must for this cause be much the greater.

But the greatnes and heinousnes of it, is made most manifest by that Argument which the Apostle useth, *Heb.* 2. 2, 3. *Heb.* 10. 28, 29. *Heb.* 12. 25. For if the Law or Covenant of *Moses* how divine soever, was given

to

to the Church nevertheleſs by one that was no more than a Servant only in Gods houſe: And if that the Grace and Truth which came by Jeſus Chriſt, was given us by the only Son of God, who was properly the Lord himſelf of the Houſe: Then a Sin, or Crime done purpoſely againſt the Goſpel of Chriſt, and out of a real intent or deſign to turn men from the expreſs Word, or Letter of that Law or Covenant which was ſet up by Chriſt, ---must be a far greater Evil, or Impiety againſt God, than the like ſin attempted againſt the Law of *Moſes*, with a purpoſe or intent to turn men from the Letter and expreſs Word of it.

There is ſuch Force and Strength in this Argument, added to what hath been already ſaid, as there needs no more to be ſaid, to manifeſt the abominableneſs of this Evil, and therefore we ſhall herewith conclude this Diſcourſe, as with that great word of Truth, which ought in this caſe to be moſt of all pondered, and conſidered by them whom it moſt concerns.

For if it were evil in any, (even in him that had the name of a Prophet,) to turn men from the Law, or from the Word of *Moſes* who was but the Servant of God, with an intent that they ſhould rely upon another word, different from it even upon his Word, (or upon ſuch a Sign or Wonder as was wrought by him) who did deſire ſo to turn them from *Moſes*, and if this was ſuch an Evil, as was by Gods own Command---*to be puniſhed abſolutely with Death*---Then how much greater evil muſt it be in the ſight of God, to go about to turn men from the expreſs Word, and Law of the Lord Chriſt, who was the only begotten Son of God, with an intent that they ſhould rely upon another Word, different from it, and to do this not only wilfully, but avowedly, and profeſſedly, by preaching to men openly; that it is not their duty to rely upon the Word of Chriſt, (as it is immediately and expreſly ſet down by the Holy Spirit,) but upon the Church only, and what the Church ſhall declare to them concerning the ſaid Word, and when to effect this alſo the better, men ſhall throw ſo great Contempt and Scandal upon the ſaid Word, as to affirm it to be ſo dark and confuſed, that no certain or infallible Sence either is in it, or can poſſibly be had from it.

And if this ſin were the greater under the Law, becauſe of thoſe Miracles which God had wrought by *Moſes*, to teſtifie him to be *the Servant of himſelf*, Then it muſt be an aggravation of the ſaid ſin under the Goſpel: Becauſe God hath not only by Miracles, but even by *Moſes* himſelf, and by many other means and ways in his Providence, born a far greater Teſtimony to the Lord Jeſus Chriſt (than ever he did bear unto *Moſes*,) and hath abundantly manifeſted, That he was *the Only begotten Son of himſelf*.

And if any man under the Law, that did attempt to turn men from the word of the ſaid Law, was to be accounted as a falſe Prophet, much more then ought he to be ſo accounted, that doth both with all Induſtry and ſet Deſign indeavour to do this under the Goſpel.

FINIS.